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(2) 442 1

ESSAYS IN CRITICISM

THIRD SERIES

BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN



BOSTON
THE BALL PUBLISHING CO.
1910

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INTRODUCTION

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CONTENTS

Introduction 5
On the Modern Element in Literature 35
Dante and Beatrice 87
Obermann 111
Sainte-Beuve 137
Renan 153
Johnson's Lives 183
A "Friend of God" 223
An Eton Boy 249

INTRODUCTION

Matthew Arnold published the first series of his *Essays in Criticism* in 1865. He died in 1888. A few months later, a second series of *Essays in Criticism* was published. Between the issue of these two series a generation elapsed. Now, in 1910, a third and last series of *Essays in Criticism,* appears, after an equal lapse of time.

Of the high critical value of these essays, Time has been the best and kindest judge. To us, as we read them to-day, such essays as those *On the Modern Element in Literature* and on *Obermann* have an abiding and prophetic truth which raises them at once to the plane of classic criticism. To become classic, criticism must hold a flawless mirror up to nature, and interpret adequately what that mirror reflects. Judged by this standard, the third series of *Essays in Criticism* suffers no diminution by comparison with its predecessors. In fact, we may surely claim that the essay which opens the volume ranks higher

than any which have preceded it, since its sympathy and its voice are alike universal in their truth. Matthew Arnold's modesty for a long time prevented its publication, but, at last, after twelve years, he reprinted it in *Macmillan's Magazine* with an interesting prefatory note.

The essay *On the Modern Element of Literature,* he says, "was delivered as an inaugural lecture in the Poetry Chair at Oxford. It was never printed, but there appeared at the time several comments on it from critics who had either heard it, or heard reports about it. It was meant to be followed and completed by a course of lectures developing the subject entirely, and some of these were given. But the course was broken off because I found my knowledge insufficient for treating in a solid way many portions of the subject chosen. The inaugural lecture, however, treating a portion of the subject where my knowledge was perhaps less insufficient, and where besides my hearers were better able to help themselves out from their own knowledge, is here printed. No one feels the imperfection of this sketchy and generalizing mode of treatment, less to my taste now than it was eleven years ago, but the style too, which is that of the doctor rather than the explorer, is a style

which I have long since learnt to abandon. Nevertheless, having written much of late about Hellenism and Hebraism, and Hellenism being to many people almost an empty name compared with Hebraism, I print this lecture with the hope that it may serve, in the absence of other and fuller illustrations, to give some notion of the Hellenic spirit and its works, and of their significance in the history of the evolution of the human spirit in general."

These words are a pleasing reflection of Arnold's personality, but two generations have proven his instinct to have been false. The essay has passed successfully through a long probation, and Time at last claims toll.

The three essays on *Obermann*, *Renan*, and *Sainte-Beuve* are, each, significant mile-stones of interpretation, and two generations have preserved their freshness likewise unimpaired. Each carries its message to us to-day, and each reflects most clearly the spirit of its subject. Of the other essays included in the volume, we may say that they fully sustain the reputation of Matthew Arnold as one of the few world-critics whose work will stand the enduring test of Time.

The publication of a third series of Arnold's *Essays in Criticism* offers a most fitting

opportunity to pause and test the value and validity of contemporary criticism, to lay it unobtrusively by the side of Arnold's critical contribution, and, looking at it in the spirit of the age, to hazard a forecast of the future.

Of this opportunity I have endeavoured to take advantage, and if the point of view which I voice should, at first, seem novel, believe that in truth it is as old as Plato and that it can point to high exemplars in the past and present of its theory and practice. Let us keep Arnold present in our minds as an element of our thought, but regard him as a voice crying in the wilderness, uttering many wise words, which are true when separated from his personality, but now and then unsafe when guided by his pleading heart and tongue. For much of what we say, he has been the precursor, and we owe him an incalculable debt for starting the critical impulse, but he falls short of our ideal in some respects, and occasionally, though seldom, he is antagonistic to it.

Briefly, the ideal is this: that criticism shall consist in the identification, as far as possible, of the critic with the man whom he criticises,— and in the interpretation of the latter's soul by the critic in terms of imaginative, that is— to say, poetic truth. Since the human race

is progressing steadily, and since the line of progress lies along the road of sympathy, I think that we may do more than hope: we may predict what the nature of criticism in the future will be.

First of all, therefore, we may say that the new criticism will be sympathetic, for this will be essential, if it is to interpret. "How can a writer adequately interpret the activity of his age when he is not in sympathy with it?" exclaims Arnold in his essay *On the Modern Element in Literature.* Yet lack of sympathy is our vice, the one great weakness which we have to combat. Lately, the *London Times* has been bewailing the lack of sympathy to be found in modern drama, and a few sentences from its complaint may have their fitness here. "Most modern writers seem to be reporting upon life as if it were a piece of machinery; and their report is to the effect that it was badly designed from the first, and has long been utterly out of repair. . . . Our modern writers . . . rub the gilt off the gingerbread from a sense of duty, and then tell us that the gingerbread is not worth eating. They exhort us to see things as they are and then represent them as not worth seeing. They tear the veil away only to show that there is nothing behind it.

'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' That is the true moral to be drawn from much of our serious art; and it is little wonder that many draw it and prefer musical comedy."

The criticism of to-day only too frequently applies the same point of view to literature, forgetting that books are not corpses, nor criticism a dissecting-room. If the literature of our day is to be mainly criticism, as for a time it must be, apart from the development of the short-story, let it be, in Arnold's phrase, "a criticism of life," and not, according to the naturalist's point of view, a criticism of death. The criticism of the future will revolt from this latter ideal, which would define the critic's office as an *analysis of death,* and will substitute for this definition the true one—that criticism is rather a *synthesis of life.* When called upon to choose between poetry and pathology, it will not find it difficult to make a final decision.

The new criticism will take little account of bodies: it will rather care mainly for souls. Arnold has taught us by example, if not in theory, that personality is almost of paramount importance as the interpreter of a man's thought and message. Therefore the new criticism will seek personality first of all.

Environment will be held as a topic of little importance for investigation, but the spiritual essence of the man will be held of much, I may say, chief, value. This being true, the criticism of the future will follow Arnold's example, and view with disfavour and suspicion any over-serious attempt to base literary criticism upon the laws of history, heredity, or physiological psychology. It will not overlook the value of such laws, but the study of them will be kept wholly subsidiary to the critical appreciation of spiritual beauty.

The future critic will pay little attention to the so-called "*higher criticism.*" Rather will he concern himself with the exercise of the *inner criticism—the criticism of life, which is based on the complete identification of critic and subject.* In the *true* sense of the word, such criticism will be impressionistic, but the impression recorded will be based on a sound foundation of critical ethics. This ethical standard will save it from being spasmodic or crude, quite as much as its impressionistic method will rescue it from the danger of pedantry and an excessively academic standard. This assumption of impressionism does not imply that the criticism of the future will be, to employ Mr. Brownell's piquant phrase, an "irresponsible exercise

of the nervous system." It will be nervous, I grant you, if by nervous you mean sensitive in feeling and expression, but it will be lucid in its reasoning, following, somewhat cautiously however, Arnold as a guide. It will assume that an attitude of detachment on the critic's part implies a totally erroneous theory of criticism, and it will keep in mind the fact that Arnold himself is at his best, when he forgets his own identity, and enters wholly into the spirit of his subject. *In criticism, as in life, since both are quests, you must lose yourself to find yourself.*

Complete identification implies possession of all the theological virtues. The criticism of the future will value highly faith and hope, for it will be founded upon them, but it will be particularly careful not to forget charity. Good taste will remind the critic of this duty, and also warn him not to strive after effect for effect's sake. The new criticism will not ignore, to be sure, the frequent value and salutary influence of paradox. Far from it. But it will never sacrifice soul to form, nor surrender, under any circumstances, sense to sound.

Taking care not to overestimate the importance of technique in his own work, the future critic will make a consideration of

it in his subject subordinate to his efforts at reaching the heart and soul of the man he is studying. He will remember that the man who criticises form only, and, finding the form bad, wholly condemns the work, is essentially disproportionate and uncritical in his mental outlook. Curiously enough, Arnold has been severely accused of this very fault by no less a critic than Richard Holt Hutton. "Read," says he, "his five lectures on translating Homer, and observe how exclusively the critic's mind is occupied with the form as distinguished from the substance of the Homeric poetry. Even when he concerns himself with the greatest modern poets . . . it is always the style and superficial doctrine of their poetry, not the individual character and unique genius which occupy him." "Superficial doctrine" is delicious. The critic of the future will take warning, and not sin through over-confidence.

The new criticism will be simple, searching, and salutary. Avoiding metaphysical entanglements, it will rely on intuition only so far as that intuition finds its justification in already established truth. It will therefore be based on tradition and sanction. Its motto will be faith and its watchword romance. *It will not be proud*

and analyse truth: rather will it be humble and seek truth. The fact is that contemporary criticism has fallen into a partial pathetic fallacy. Identifying itself to a greater or less degree with science, it scorns romance and faith, forgetting that faith and romance are the progenitors of science, that Columbus and Bacon, and others such as they, who followed the great quest of life as the critic should follow the great quest of souls, were wholly animated by these two aspects of truth which are really one, and that it is because they saw a wonderful and seemingly impossible vision, and because seeing it they believed, that their achievement has made modern science possible.

We are apt to forget the existence of truth in our midst, and seeking wildly after it far afield, to fail entirely in our quest. This is to be one message of criticism in the future. We are indeed already beginning to hear it voiced, and already there are many signs of the second spring. Nowhere has the truth been more clearly and searchingly pointed out than by a young American poet of high gifts and high accomplishment, Mr. William Stanley Braithwaite. *Sandy Star,* printed last year in the *Atlantic Monthly,* conveys a great message to our generation.

"No more from out the sunset,
No more across the foam,
No more across the windy hills
Will Sandy Star come home.

"He went away to search it
With a curse upon his tongue:
And in his hands the staff of life,
Made music as it swung.

"I wonder if he found it
And knows the mystery now—
Our Sandy Star who went away,
With the secret on his brow."

The new criticism will therefore be introspective in its search for truth. It will live neither in the past, nor in the future, but in the present. Living in the present, it will not criticise, in the commonly accepted sense of the word: rather will it appreciate. In other words, *it will seek for beauty and not for imperfection.* Since the ideal critic must be tolerant, he will not be excessively fastidious. No man can unite both qualities. Arnold endeavoured to do so, and failed. To be sure, the future critic will cultivate discretion, but he will not carry this discretion to the point of timidity.

The new criticism, seeking beauty only, will be positive, and not negative. As a

corollary to this, it will perceive the true meaning of freedom. The future criticism will not confound lubricity (I use the word in a somewhat pleasant sense) with lucidity, nor well-oiled machinery with a clear-flowing current, nor again, on the other hand, will it mistake anarchy for freedom. It will recognise that to be free it is simply necessary to unmanacle the limbs, and that to eliminate the surroundings of life and life's atmosphere, as Nietzsche and certain of his critical disciples have done, is simply to substitute new bonds for old.

Realising this somewhat elementary truth, *the criticism of the future will study before it teaches;* and will take little for granted. Since its fundamental object is constructive, it will feel the necessity of ascertaining beyond the shadow of a doubt that its foundation is secure, and will recognise that we are yet children in our apprehension of spiritual truth. In a new and truer sense of the word, it will be inductive on the grand scale, and each new critical revelation of its masters will serve as an additional contribution to the body of our spiritual insight.

The criticism of the future will, above all else, teach, and the spirit of its teachers will be one of humility and not of pride. Pride

is the vice of critics, and it usually takes the form of excessive urbanity. The new criticism, therefore, in its anxiety to avoid the reproach of provinciality will not fall into the greater fault of excessive urbanity or civility. The moments when Matthew Arnold is most provincial are the very moments when he endeavours consciously to be urbane. Such urbanity savours much of the calcium-light when practised by lesser craftsmen than Arnold. For such as these, there are more effective means of illumination.

One of these,—perhaps the most effective, —is a sense of humour. The new criticism will bear in mind Arnold's utterance in his lecture *On the Modern Element in Literature:* —"There is a comic side from which to regard humanity as well as a tragic one." It will be genial and fresh in its outlook, and will value highly a sense of humour, knowing that without such a gift, no man, much less a critic, can be quite catholic.

This sense of humour will carry with it, and perhaps dictate, an instinct for proportion, not unmingled with proper dignity. At present, there are two kinds of critics who consider their opportunity for critical expression in two respectively different ways. One class looks upon the exercise of the crit-

ical faculty as a barren heath for him to wander on whithersoever he wills: the other as a road leading to a definite goal whither he proposes to conduct his readers. The criticism of the future will recognise that the former has no excuse for being, and that the latter outlook only can make for idealistic criticism.

The manner of the new criticism will be confident, but not self-willed, either in this or in other respects. A sense of proportion should cause the future critic to feel neither superior nor inferior to his subject. Rather should he approach it as nearly on an equal plane as possible, for otherwise he will fail in that identification which he seeks. Henry James in *Views and Reviews* mentions as Arnold's chief merit the fact that he stands on high ground. That he stands on high ground is true, and admirable when he voices general principles, but now and then, though fortunately not often, the ground of his criticism is so high that it dwarfs his subject, and he declaims to the atmosphere alone. Lucidity under these conditions is hardly desirable.

The fact is that Arnold is a reformer before he is a critic, and that this narrows his outlook. No reformer has ever had or can ever have the wide impartial critical mind,

which "sees life steadily and sees it whole." He is eaten up by the zeal of his task, and he lives detached days. A man may, none the less, be greater as a reformer than as a critic, if he is whole-hearted and not too sane. Matthew Arnold just fell short of universal critical greatness, and the cause of his limitation was the very lucidity which he valued so highly and sought so earnestly. The new criticism will therefore not be too eager to reform, nor, remembering Arnold's example, will it be obtrusively didactic.

Keeping ever before him the ideal of identification, the future critic will not sneer but sympathise. His sympathy will be founded upon faith in men, and he will study men because of this faith that is in him. He will not study, therefore, objectively. He will study subjectively, knowing that the kingdom of God is within. He will therefore treat as secondary the consideration of literary polish on the part of his subject, though he will by no means ignore it as an element of beauty. *The critic's first and chief office, however, will be to go directly with keen penetration to the core and soul of the thought and the man.*

This is his mission in life,—*to seek, find, interpret, and apply.* His criticism will there-

fore be warm and imaginative, rather than cold and reminiscent of the laboratory.

Curiously enough, Arnold's most direct influence here in America has been on men who have lacked creative imagination. If one were asked who, he thought, would be most likely to be influenced by Matthew Arnold's criticism and literary style, he would be apt to mention such men as Professor Woodberry and Professor Santayana. Certainly the names of President Eliot and Professor Wendell would never occur to him, for Arnold is essentially imaginative. These men, to be sure, are often fanciful, but the criticism of the future will demand imagination. Its practitioners, having a clear eye and a sure touch, will be responsible to themselves and to their audience, and will be eminently sane and normal. The criticism of the future will not illustrate and comment: it will express. Discarding realism, it will substitute idealism, perceiving clearly that *the realist does not realise, but merely analyses, and that it is left to the idealist alone to realise and express.*

Arnold has defined criticism as "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." Under the rule of the *new criticism,* the true *higher criticism,* this definition will practi-

cally stand. One little change in wording there will be. For *disinterested,* we are learning to substitute the word *interested,* knowing that greater than all the rest is the gift peculiar to St. Paul, the gift of vital spiritual sympathy; in other words, the gift of identification.

Do not misunderstand me. This does not mean that we must be completely satisfied with the subject of our criticism. On the contrary, the great virtue in the criticism of given works is, in Arnold's words, "to be perpetually dissatisfied with these works, while they perpetually fall short of a high and perfect ideal." This is the very spirit of the rule. Let us identify ourselves so completely with the artist that we feel with him and in his spirit, his own sense of limitation, that we communicate our sympathetic and coöperative stimulus to him, not only encouraging him, but also seeing more clearly ourselves because of the noble effort. Ability, therefore, on the part of the critic to identify himself with his author,—to assume the author's point of view while preserving his own identity,—this shall be the chief distinction of the future critic. By this standard he shall judge others, and by it he shall himself be judged.

The criticism of the future will therefore be in no wise academic. It will be conservative, to be sure, but conservative in the true sense of the word. Realising the limitations of national affinities, it will, in general, reserve for its greatest men the field of international criticism, knowing that they alone can interpret other races with adequacy and sympathy. It will exclude from this limitation the criticism of work which is universal, but even here it will reserve such criticism in its higher manifestations for the leaders of its thought.

Lastly, and most important of all, the highest criticism of the future will be left to the poets. It will require high seership and a special dower, and men shall listen to it as to an intellectual law, finding therein the perfect freedom which their heart desires. Its eminent sanity will stand as a living and permanent proof of the fact that the poetic temperament is not necessarily erratic, and that one may be possessed by the imaginative temper without being carried away from sense in a swirl of sound. Matthew Arnold substantially asserts the same fact in his lecture *On the Modern Element in Literature*, to which I must have recourse once more. "I shall not, I hope, be thought,"

says he, "to magnify too much my office if I add, that it is to the poetical literature of an age that we must, in general, look for the most perfect, the most adequate interpretation of that age,—for the performance of a work which demands the most energetic and harmonious activity of all the powers of the human mind."

Here is a declaration in no uncertain terms of the mission of poetical criticism. I should like to go a step further, and predict that the new criticism will, on the whole, be Gothic, recognising, however, that, as applied to criticism, the terms "classic" and "Gothic" do not necessarily exclude one another. Here I must differ for a moment with a deservedly admired critic, Mr. Ferris Greenslet. In his delicately woven study of James Russell Lowell, which contains much that is stimulating and more that is true, he writes as follows, with Lowell ever before him as a text. "A man may prefer the Gothic to the classic and still be a good and stimulating critic. But he will hardly take a place upon the supreme bench of the critical court unless there be imperishably, potently, in his memory the bright forms of classic art as constant touchstones and exemplars.

"The truth is that in Lowell's criticism

there is sometimes a little of the note of the amateur. He writes habitually more as a reader, a bookman, than as a professional critic. This is one reason why the best of his essays are so freshly delightful. Yet it is also the reason why the body of his criticism is stimulating and suggestive rather than convincing, and why some few of his studies do not so much edify as initiate."

Now this attitude is essentially uncritical. There is a lurking implication, nowhere precisely expressed, that a "Gothic" critic must by his nature be somewhat amateurish, and that the critic, to be adequate and convincing, must turn to classical models for the interpretation of his vision.

This is precisely what we should expect to hear from Boileau were he living to-day, and betokens something very like a relapse into an era of Augustanism. If this point of view had been defended by one critic only, I should not have held its utterance to be ominous. But when, out of the six American critics whom we value most highly for their acumen, five declare for this standard, there is cause for anxiety. Mr. Brownell, Mr. More, Mr. Greenslet, Professor Perry, and Mr. Huneker, each representing a quite different and distinct outlook upon life and letters, all

declare for Augustanism, and Professor Woodberry is left alone to defend the lists of romance against all comers. How valiantly he does battle for the right, let his *New Defence of Poetry* attest. The title of the volume in which it appears is itself significant, and might serve as a motto for the servants of the lamp, the genii of the new criticism. After all, *the purpose of criticism is to read and interpret sympathetically the heart of man to himself.*

This is the ideal, and it yet falls far short of accomplishment. But it is not as far off as it seems. The keenest critics which this age has produced,—Matthew Arnold and Lionel Johnson, Francis Thompson and Walter Pater, William Ernest Henley and Arthur Symons, Theodore Watts-Dunton and James Russell Lowell, Edmund Clarence Stedman and George Edward Woodberry, to name no others,—have been the poets, and their criticism has been from the poet's point of view.

To quote from Mr. Brownell: "What criticism lacks, and what will always be a limitation to its interest and its power, is the element of beauty which it of necessity largely foregoes in its concentration upon truth. It is less potent and persuasive than poetry, than

romance, not because in dealing with literature rather than directly with life it occupies a lower or less vital field, but because its province lies outside the realm of all those puissant aids to cogency and impressiveness that appeal to the sense of beauty and accordingly influence so powerfully not only the intellect but the emotions as well."

Mr. Brownell may dislike being quoted on this subject, for in a vital sense these words are an admission of limitation. That this limitation is not personal, but largely self-inflicted, not only in his case but in that of many other deservedly eminent critics, is a point which he might dispute, but which I feel to be inevitably true. Why should not criticism deal with life, and consider literature only as a mirror in which its permanent and fixed reflection may be studied? Matthew Arnold keeps insisting, as the new criticism will insist, that the object of criticism is to persuade. If the most potent instrument of persuasion is the poetic and romantic impulse, as Mr. Brownell admits it to be, then by all means let us employ it in preference to any other.

After all, the poet's outlook upon life can be the only true one, for the poet alone is consummately dowered with sympathetic in-

sight, and his gift, if not misapplied, is the very gift which the critic should possess above all others.

When I speak of the poets as the critics of the future, I, of course, only refer to those who, in Arnold's words, "see life steadily, and see it whole." Such critics will not see truth by chance flashes of an uncontrolled insight, (though this sort of insight is better than none at all), but will rather take life quietly and simply, seeing beauty rather than seeking it. The "poet" of the pornographic mind and tongue will have no share in this work, and the future critic will bear in mind those noble words of Matthew Arnold, taken from the lecture *On the Modern Element in Literature* which is destined to be so much quoted and discussed. "The human race," says he, "has the strongest, the most invincible tendency to *live*, to *develop* itself. It retains, it clings to what fosters its life, what favours its development, to the literature which exhibits it in its vigour; it rejects, it abandons what does not foster its development, the literature which exhibits it arrested and decayed."

Such words as these should serve as a warning to certain journalistic poets who almost form a pathological school, and whose work,

heady with wine, is a sure portent of disintegration. The criticism of the future will not identify itself with such as these. It will be an academy, not a forum or arena.

Had we no other poets, we might despair of the literary issue. But to-day it is America and not England whose genuine poetry shows promise and an unclouded vision. Now here is a new field for its poetic energy, a field which can reach and teach many more than the books of song.

Is not the application worthy of a trial? Some, consciously or unconsciously, are expressing themselves in this new mode, and proving that the barrier between creation and criticism is purely an imaginary one, which consequently never did nor could stand. Others, doubtless, lie hidden in ambush. Conditions in America are surely ripe for such a movement. In that lecture *On the Modern Element in Literature,* which I here permit myself to quote for the last time, Matthew Arnold delivered his mind of these mighty words.

"One of the noblest channels of Athenian life, that of political activity, had begun to narrow and to dry up. That was the true catastrophe of the ancient world: it was then that the oracles of the ancient world should

have become silent, and that its gods should have forsaken their temples; for from that date the intellectual and spiritual life of Greece was left without an adequate material basis of political and practical life; and both began inevitably to decay. The opportunity of the ancient world was then lost, never to return; for neither the Macedonian nor the Roman world, which possessed an adequate material basis, possessed, like the Athens of earlier times, an adequate intellect and soul to inform and inspire them; and there was left of the ancient world, when Christianity arrived, of Greece only a head without a body, and of Rome only a body without a soul."

These words, though Arnold knew it not, were written for us. In the United States, the channel of political activity is more active than it has ever been before, and the opportunity to interpret life is correspondingly great.

To-day we are living in an age of faith, and we believe in the plenary inspiration of plenary endeavour. Because we have this faith, we are peculiarly qualified to undertake the task. Beginning modestly, we shall grow in sympathy, and growing in sympathy, shall develop the critical temper. Developing thus, our effort shall spell *progress:* not the physical progress of science and knowledge, but the

spiritual progress of insight and wisdom. Here there will be no room for the pessimist: the battle will be to the strong.

Since the present creative impulse has all but ceased, it would surely seem as if the time for testing had begun. May we not turn to that with the readier vigour, and let this new and higher criticism carry us over the shoals? Its result should be a stimulated energy, which would flow into creative work, and save us from relapsing into an era of formalism and Augustanism. Let us preserve while there is yet time what creative energy is left to us, for a critical purpose, and employ this purpose as a stimulant which shall ultimately make our work result in a renewed and greater creative effort. Doing so, we shall conform to the spirit of our age, but, conforming outwardly and following the current till we ultimately reach a favourable situation, we shall turn and master it.

This is our ideal. How near or how far away the realisation of it is, time alone can tell, but that it lies beyond us and straight ahead is very clear.

Matthew Arnold was one of the last and greatest of the critics under the old law, and as such he was a prophet of the new. The spirit of a later age spake in and through him,

when he penned those noble sentences full of prophetic truth which close his essay on *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time.*

"I conclude with what I said at the beginning: to have the sense of creative activity is the great happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge. Then it may have, in no contemptible measure, a joyful sense of creative activity; a sense which a man of insight and conscience will prefer to what he might derive from a poor, starved, fragmentary, inadequate creation. And at some epochs no other creation is possible.

"Still in full measure, the sense of creative activity belongs only to genuine creation; in literature we must never forget that. But what true man of letters ever can forget it? It is no such common matter for a gifted nature to come into possession of a current of true and living ideas, and to produce amidst the inspiration of them, that we are likely to understate it. The epochs of Æschylus and Shakespeare make us feel their preëminence. In an epoch like those is, no doubt, the true life of literature: there is the promised land, towards which criticism can only beckon.

That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness: but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar, is already, perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries; it will certainly be the best title to esteem with posterity."

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN.

March 23, 1910.

ESSAYS IN CRITICISM

ON THE MODERN ELEMENT IN LITERATURE

ON THE MODERN ELEMENT IN LITERATURE

IT is related in one of those legends which illustrate the history of Buddhism, that a certain disciple once presented himself before his master, Buddha, with the desire to be permitted to undertake a mission of peculiar difficulty. The compassionate teacher represented to him the obstacles to be surmounted and the risks to be run. Pourna—so the disciple was called—insisted, and replied, with equal humility and adroitness, to the successive objections of his adviser. Satisfied at last by his answers of the fitness of his disciple, Buddha accorded to him the desired permission; and dismissed him to his task with these remarkable words, nearly identical with those in which he

himself is said to have been admonished by a divinity at the outset of his own career:—"Go then, O Pourna," are his words; "having been delivered, deliver; having been consoled, console; being arrived thyself at the farther bank, enable others to arrive there also."

It was a moral deliverance, eminently, of which the great Oriental reformer spoke; it was a deliverance from the pride, the sloth, the anger, the selfishness, which impair the moral activity of man—a deliverance which is demanded of all individuals and in all ages. But there is another deliverance for the human race, hardly less important, indeed, than the first—for in the enjoyment of both united consists man's true freedom—but demanded far less universally, and even more rarely and imperfectly obtained; a deliverance neglected, apparently hardly conceived, in some ages, while it has been pursued

with earnestness in others, which derive from that very pursuit their peculiar character. This deliverance is an intellectual deliverance.

An intellectual deliverance is the peculiar demand of those ages which are called modern; and those nations are said to be imbued with the modern spirit most eminently in which the demand for such a deliverance has been made with most zeal, and satisfied with most completeness. Such a deliverance is emphatically, whether we will or no, the demand of the age in which we ourselves live. All intellectual pursuits our age judges according to their power of helping to satisfy this demand; of all studies it asks, above all, the question, how far they can contribute to this deliverance.

I propose, on this my first occasion of speaking here,[1] to attempt such a gen-

[1] Published in 1869.

eral survey of ancient classical literature and history as may afford us the conviction—in presence of the doubts so often expressed of the profitableness, in the present day, of our study of this literature—that, even admitting to their fullest extent the legitimate demands of our age, the literature of ancient Greece is, even for modern times, a mighty agent of intellectual deliverance; even for modern times, therefore, an object of indestructible interest.

But first let us ask ourselves why the demand for an intellectual deliverance arises in such an age as the present, and in what the deliverance itself consists? The demand arises, because our present age has around it a copious and complex present, and behind it a copious and complex past; it arises, because the present age exhibits to the individual man who contemplates it the spectacle

of a vast multitude of facts awaiting and inviting his comprehension. The deliverance consists in man's comprehension of this present and past. It begins when our mind begins to enter into possession of the general ideas which are the law of this vast multitude of facts. It is perfect when we have acquired that harmonious acquiescence of mind which we feel in contemplating a grand spectacle that is intelligible to us; when we have lost that impatient irritation of mind which we feel in presence of an immense, moving, confused spectacle which, while it perpetually excites our curiosity, perpetually baffles our comprehension.

This, then, is what distinguishes certain epochs in the history of the human race, and our own amongst the number; —on the one hand, the presence of a significant spectacle to contemplate; on the other hand, the desire to find the

true point of view from which to contemplate this spectacle. He who has found that point of view, he who adequately comprehends this spectacle, has risen to the comprehension of his age: he who communicates that point of view to his age, he who interprets to it that spectacle, is one of his age's intellectual deliverers.

The spectacle, the facts, presented for the comprehension of the present age, are indeed immense. The facts consist of the events, the institutions, the sciences, the arts, the literatures, in which human life has manifested itself up to the present time: the spectacle is the collective life of humanity. And everywhere there is connexion, everywhere there is illustration: no single event, no single literature, is adequately comprehended except in its relation to other events, to other literatures. The literature of ancient Greece, the litera-

ture of the Christian Middle Age, so long as they are regarded as two isolated literatures, two isolated growths of the human spirit, are not adequately comprehended; and it is adequate comprehension which is the demand of the present age. "We must compare,"—the illustrious Chancellor of Cambridge [2] said the other day to his hearers at Manchester,—"we must compare the works of other ages with those of our own age and country; that, while we feel proud of the immense development of knowledge and power of production which we possess, we may learn humility in contemplating the refinement of feeling and intensity of thought manifested in the works of the older schools." To know how others stand, that we may know how we ourselves stand; and to know how we ourselves stand, that we may correct our mistakes

[2] The late Prince Consort.—M. A.

and achieve our deliverance—that is our problem.

But all facts, all the elements of the spectacle before us, have not an equal value—do not merit a like attention: and it is well that they do not, for no man would be adequate to the task of thoroughly mastering them all. Some have more significance for us, others have less; some merit our utmost attention in all their details, others it is sufficient to comprehend in their general character, and then they may be dismissed.

What facts, then, let us ask ourselves, what elements of the spectacle before us, will naturally be most interesting to a highly developed age like our own, to an age making the demand which we have described for an intellectual deliverance by means of the complete intelligence of its own situation? Evidently, the other ages similarly de-

veloped, and making the same demand. And what past literature will naturally be most interesting to such an age as our own? Evidently, the literatures which have most successfully solved for *their* ages the problem which occupies ours: the literatures which in their day and for their own nation have adequately comprehended, have adequately represented, the spectacle before them. A significant, a highly-developed, a culminating epoch, on the one hand,—a comprehensive, a commensurate, an adequate literature, on the other,—these will naturally be the objects of deepest interest to our modern age. Such an epoch and such a literature are, in fact, *modern,* in the same sense in which our own age and literature are modern; they are founded upon a rich past and upon an instructive fulness of experience.

It may, however, happen that a great

epoch is without a perfectly adequate literature; it may happen that a great age, a great nation, has attained a remarkable fulness of political and social development, without intellectually taking the complete measure of itself, without adequately representing that development in its literature. In this case, the *epoch,* the *nation* itself, will still be an object of the greatest interest to us; but the *literature* will be an object of less interest to us: the facts, the material spectacle, are there; but the contemporary view of the facts, the intellectual interpretation, are inferior and inadequate.

It may happen, on the other hand, that great authors, that a powerful literature, are found in an age and nation less great and powerful than themselves; it may happen that a literature, that a man of genius, may arise adequate to the representation of a

greater, a more highly developed age than that in which they appear; it may happen that a literature completely interprets its epoch, and yet has something over; that it has a force, a richness, a geniality, a power of view which the materials at its disposition are insufficient adequately to employ. In such a case, the literature will be more interesting to us than the epoch. The interpreting power, the illuminating and revealing intellect, are there; but the spectacle on which they throw their light is not fully worthy of them.

And I shall not, I hope, be thought to magnify too much my office if I add, that it is to the poetical literature of an age that we must, in general, look for the most perfect, the most adequate interpretation of that age,—for the performance of a work which demands the most energetic and harmonious activity of all the powers of the human

mind. Because that activity of the whole mind, that genius, as Johnson nobly describes it, "without which judgment is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates," is in poetry at its highest stretch and in its most energetic exertion.

What we seek, therefore, what will most enlighten us, most contribute to our intellectual deliverance, is the union of two things; it is the coexistence, the simultaneous appearance, of a great epoch and a great literature.

Now the culminating age in the life of ancient Greece I call, beyond question, a great epoch; the life of Athens in the fifth century before our era I call one of the highly developed, one of the marking, one of the modern periods in the life of the whole human race. It has been said that the "Athens of Pericles was a vigorous man, at the

summit of his bodily strength and mental energy." There was the utmost energy of life there, public and private; the most entire freedom, the most unprejudiced and intelligent observation of human affairs. Let us rapidly examine some of the characteristics which distinguish modern epochs; let us see how far the culminating century of ancient Greece exhibits them; let us compare it, in respect of them, with a much later, a celebrated century; let us compare it with the age of Elizabeth in our own country.

To begin with what is exterior. One of the most characteristic outward features of a *modern* age, of an age of advanced civilization, is the banishment of the ensigns of war and bloodshed from the intercourse of civil life. Crime still exists, and wars are still carried on; but within the limits of civil life a circle has been formed within

which man can move securely, and develop the arts of peace uninterruptedly. The private man does not go forth to his daily occupation prepared to assail the life of his neighbour or to have to defend his own. With the disappearance of the constant means of offence the occasions of offence diminish; society at last acquires repose, confidence, and free activity. An important inward characteristic, again, is the growth of a tolerant spirit; that spirit which is the offspring of an enlarged knowledge; a spirit patient of the diversities of habits and opinions. Other characteristics are the multiplication of the conveniences of life, the formation of taste, the capacity for refined pursuits. And this leads us to the supreme characteristic of all: the intellectual maturity of man himself; the tendency to observe facts with a critical spirit; to search for their law, not to wander

among them at random; to judge by the rule of reason, not by the impulse of prejudice or caprice.

Well, now, with respect to the presence of all these characteristics in the age of Pericles, we possess the explicit testimony of an immortal work,—of the history of Thucydides. "The Athenians first," he says,—speaking of the gradual development of Grecian society up to the period when the Peloponnesian war commenced—"the Athenians first left off the habit of wearing arms:" that is, this mark of superior civilization had, in the age of Pericles, become general in Greece, had long been visible at Athens. In the time of Elizabeth, on the other hand, the wearing of arms was universal in England and throughout Europe. Again, the conveniences, the ornaments, the luxuries of life, had become common at Athens at the time of which we are speaking. But there

had been an advance even beyond this; there had been an advance to that perfection, that propriety of taste which proscribes the excess of ornament, the extravagance of luxury. The Athenians had given up, Thucydides says, had given up, although not very long before, an extravagance of dress and an excess of personal ornament which, in the first flush of newly-discovered luxury, had been adopted by some of the richer classes. The height of civilization in this respect seems to have been attained; there was general elegance and refinement of life, and there was simplicity. What was the case in this respect in the Elizabethan age? The scholar Casaubon, who settled in England in the reign of James I., bears evidence to the want here, even at that time, of conveniences of life which were already to be met with on the continent of Europe. On the other

hand, the taste for fantastic, for excessive personal adornment, to which the portraits of the time bear testimony, is admirably set forth in the work of a great novelist, who was also a very truthful antiquarian—in the "Kenilworth" of Sir Walter Scott. We all remember the description, in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of the second volume of "Kenilworth," of the barbarous magnificence, the "fierce vanities," of the dress of the period.

Pericles praises the Athenians that they had discovered sources of recreation for the spirit to counterbalance the labours of the body: compare these, compare the pleasures which charmed the whole body of the Athenian people through the yearly round of their festivals with the popular shows and pastimes in "Kenilworth." "We have freedom," says Pericles, "for individual diversities of opinion and character;

we do not take offense at the tastes and habits of our neighbour if they differ from our own." Yes, in Greece, in the Athens of Pericles, there is toleration; but in England, in the England of the sixteenth century?—the Puritans are then in full growth. So that with regard to these characteristics of civilization of a modern spirit which we have hitherto enumerated, the superiority, it will be admitted, rests with the age of Pericles.

Let us pass to what we said was the supreme characteristic of a highly developed, a modern age—the manifestation of a critical spirit, the endeavour after a rational arrangement and appreciation of facts. Let us consider one or two of the passages in the masterly introduction which Thucydides, the contemporary of Pericles, has prefixed to his history. What was his motive in choosing the Peloponnesian War for his

subject? Because it was, in his opinion, the most important, the most instructive event which had, up to that time, happened in the history of mankind. What is his effort in the first twenty-three chapters of his history? To place in their correct point of view all the facts which had brought Grecian society to the point at which that dominant event found it; to strip these facts of their exaggeration, to examine them critically. The enterprises undertaken in the early times of Greece were on a much smaller scale than had been commonly supposed. The Greek chiefs were induced to combine in the expedition against Troy, not by their respect for an oath taken by them all when suitors to Helen, but by their respect for the preponderating influence of Agamemnon; the siege of Troy had been protracted not so much by the valour of the besieged as by the in-

adequate mode of warfare necessitated by the want of funds of the besiegers. No doubt Thucydides' criticism of the Trojan war is not perfect; but observe how in these and many other points he labours to correct popular errors, to assign their true character to facts, complaining, as he does so, of men's habit of *uncritical* reception of current stories. "So little a matter of care to most men," he says, "is the search after truth, and so inclined are they to take up any story which is ready to their hand." "He himself," he continues, "has endeavoured to give a true picture, and believes that in the main he has done so. For some readers his history may want the charm of the uncritical, half-fabulous narratives of earlier writers; but for such as desire to gain a clear knowledge of the past, and thereby of the future also, which will surely, after the course of human

things, represent again hereafter, if not the very image, yet the near resemblance of the past—if such shall judge my work to be profitable, I shall be well content."

What language shall we properly call this? It is *modern* language; it is the language of a thoughtful philosophic man of our own days; it is the language of Burke or Niebuhr assigning the true aim of history. And yet Thucydides is no mere literary man; no isolated thinker, speaking far over the heads of his hearers to a future age—no: he was a man of action, a man of the world, a man of his time. He represents, at its best indeed, but he represents, the general intelligence of his age and nation; of a nation the meanest citizens of which could follow with comprehension the profoundly thoughtful speeches of Pericles.

Let us now turn for a contrast to a

historian of the Elizabethan age, also a man of great mark and ability, also a man of action, also a man of the world, Sir Walter Raleigh. Sir Walter Raleigh writes the "History of the World," as Thucydides has written the "History of the Peloponnesian War"; let us hear his language; let us mark his point of view; let us see what problems occur to him for solution. "Seeing," he says, "that we digress in all the ways of our lives—yea, seeing the life of man is nothing else but digression—I may be the better excused in writing their lives and actions." What are the preliminary facts which he discusses, as Thucydides discusses the Trojan War and the early naval power of Crete, and which are to lead up to his main inquiry? Open the table of contents of his first volume. You will find:—"Of the firmament, and of the waters above the firmament, and

whether there be any crystalline Heaven, or any primum mobile." You will then find:—"Of Fate, and that the stars have great influence, and that their operations may diversely be prevented or furthered." Then you come to two entire chapters on the place of Paradise, and on the two chief trees in the garden of Paradise. And in what style, with what power of criticism, does Raleigh treat the subjects so selected? I turn to the 7th section of the third chapter of his first book, which treats "Of their opinion which make Paradise as high as the moon, and of others which make it higher than the middle region of the air." Thus he begins the discussion of this opinion:—"Whereas Beda saith, and as the schoolmen affirm Paradise to be a place altogether removed from the knowledge of men ('locus a cognitione hominum remotissimus'), and Barcephas con-

ceived that Paradise was far in the east, but mounted above the ocean and all the earth, and near the orb of the moon (which opinion, though the schoolmen charge Beda withal, yet Pererius lays it off from Beda, and his master Rabanus); and whereas Rupertus in his geography of Paradise doth not much differ from the rest, but finds it seated next or nearest Heaven—". So he states the error, and now for his own criticism of it. "First, such a place cannot be commodious to live in, for being so near the moon it had been too near the sun and other heavenly bodies. Secondly, it must have been too joint a neighbour to the element of fire. Thirdly, the air in that region is so violently moved and carried about with such swiftness as nothing in that place can consist or have abiding. Fourthly,—" but what has been quoted

is surely enough, and there is no use in continuing.

Which is the ancient here, and which is the modern? Which uses the language of an intelligent man of our own days? which a language wholly obsolete and unfamiliar to us? Which has the rational appreciation and control of his facts? which wanders among them helplessly and without a clue? Is it our own countryman, or is it the Greek? And the language of Raleigh affords a fair sample of the critical power, of the point of view, possessed by the majority of intelligent men of his day; as the language of Thucydides affords us a fair sample of the critical power of the majority of intelligent men in the age of Pericles.

Well, then, in the age of Pericles we have, in spite of its antiquity, a highly-developed, a modern, a deeply interest-

ing epoch. Next comes the question: Is this epoch adequately interpreted by its highest literature? Now, the peculiar characteristic of the highest literature—the poetry—of the fifth century in Greece before the Christian era, is its *adequacy;* the peculiar characteristic of the poetry of Sophocles is its consummate, its unrivalled *adequacy;* that it represents the highly developed human nature of that age—human nature developed in a number of directions, politically, socially, religiously, morally developed—in its completest and most harmonious development in all these directions; while there is shed over this poetry the charm of that noble serenity which always accompanies true insight. If in the body of Athenians of that time there was, as we have said, the utmost energy of mature manhood, public and private; the most entire freedom, the most unprejudiced and in-

telligent observation of human affairs —in Sophocles there is the same energy, the same maturity, the same freedom, the same intelligent observation; but all these idealized and glorified by the grace and light shed over them from the noblest poetical feeling. And therefore I have ventured to say of Sophocles, that he "saw life steadily, and saw it whole." Well may we understand how Pericles—how the great statesman whose aim was, it has been said, "to realize in Athens the idea which he had conceived of human greatness," and who partly succeeded in his aim—should have been drawn to the great poet whose works are the noblest reflection of his success.

I assert, therefore, though the detailed proof of the assertion must be reserved for other opportunities, that, if the fifth century in Greece before our era is a significant and modern epoch,

the poetry of that epoch—the poetry of Pindar, Æschylus, and Sophocles—is an adequate representation and interpretation of it.

The poetry of Aristophanes is an adequate representation of it also. True, this poetry regards humanity from the comic side; but there is a comic side from which to regard humanity as well as a tragic one; and the distinction of Aristophanes is to have regarded it from the true point of view on the comic side. He too, like Sophocles, regards the human nature of his time in its fullest development; the boldest creations of a riotous imagination are in Aristophanes, as has been justly said, based always upon the foundation of a serious thought: politics, education, social life, literature—all the great modes in which the human life of his day manifested itself—are the subjects of his thoughts, and of his penetrating

comment. There is shed, therefore, over his poetry the charm, the vital freshness, which is felt when man and his relations are from any side adequately, and therefore genially, regarded. Here is the true difference between Aristophanes and Menander. There has been preserved an epitome of a comparison by Plutarch between Aristophanes and Menander, in which the grossness of the former, the exquisite truth to life and felicity of observation of the latter, are strongly insisted upon; and the preference of the refined, the learned, the intelligent men of a later period for Menander loudly proclaimed. "What should take a man of refinement to the theatre," asks Plutarch, "except to see one of Menander's plays? When do you see the theatre filled with cultivated persons, except when Menander is acted? and he is the favourite refreshment," he

continues, "to the overstrained mind of the laborious philosopher." And every one knows the famous line of tribute to this poet by an enthusiastic admirer in antiquity:—"O Life and Menander, which of you painted the other?" We remember, too, how a great English stateman is said to have declared that there was no lost work of antiquity which he so ardently desired to recover as a play of Menander. Yet Menander has perished, and Aristophanes has survived. And to what is this to be attributed? To the instinct of self-preservation in humanity. The human race has the strongest, the most invincible tendency to *live*, to *develop* itself. It retains, it clings to what fosters its life, what favours its development, to the literature which exhibits it in its vigour; it rejects, it abandons what does not foster its development, the literature which exhibits

it arrested and decayed. Now, between the times of Sophocles and Menander a great check had befallen the development of Greece;—the failure of the Athenian expedition to Syracuse, and the consequent termination of the Peloponnesian War in a result unfavourable to Athens. The free expansion of her growth was checked; one of the noblest channels of Athenian life, that of political activity, had begun to narrow and to dry up. That was the true catastrophe of the ancient world; it was then that the oracles of the ancient world should have become silent, and that its gods should have forsaken their temples; for from that date the intellectual and spiritual life of Greece was left without an adequate material basis of political and practical life; and both began inevitably to decay. The opportunity of the ancient world was then lost, never to return; for neither

the Macedonian nor the Roman world, which possessed an adequate material basis, possessed, like the Athens of earlier times, an adequate intellect and soul to inform and inspire them; and there was left of the ancient world, when Christianity arrived, of Greece only a head without a body, and of Rome only a body without a soul.

It is Athens after this check, after this diminution of vitality,—it is man with part of his life shorn away, refined and intelligent indeed, but sceptical, frivolous, and dissolute,—which the poetry of Menander represented. The cultivated, the accomplished might applaud the dexterity, the perfection of the representation—might prefer it to the free genial delineation of a more living time with which they were no longer in sympathy. But the instinct of humanity taught it, that in the one poetry there was the seed of life, in the other

poetry the seed of death; and it has rescued Aristophanes, while it has left Menander to his fate.

In the flowering period of the life of Greece, therefore, we have a culminating age, one of the flowering periods of the life of the human race: in the poetry of that age we have a literature commensurate with its epoch. It is most perfectly commensurate in the poetry of Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes; these, therefore, will be the supremely interesting objects in this literature; but the stages in literature which led up to this point of perfection, the stages in literature which led downward from it, will be deeply interesting also. A distinguished person,[3] who has lately been occupying himself with Homer, has remarked that an undue preference is given, in the studies of Oxford, to these poets over Homer. The justifica-

[3] Mr. Gladstone.—M. A.

tion of such a preference, even if we put aside all philological considerations, lies, perhaps, in what I have said. Homer himself is eternally interesting; he is a greater poetical power than even Sophocles or Æschylus; but his age is less interesting than himself. Æschylus and Sophocles represent an age as interesting as themselves; the names, indeed, in their dramas are the names of the old heroic world, from which they were far separated; but these names are taken, because the use of them permits to the poet that free and ideal treatment of his characters which the highest tragedy demands; and into these figures of the old world is poured all the fulness of life and of thought which the new world had accumulated. This new world in its maturity of reason resembles our own; and the advantage over Homer in their greater significance for *us*, which Æschylus and Sophocles

gain by belonging to this new world, more than compensates for their poetical inferiority to him.

Let us now pass to the Roman world. There is no necessity to accumulate proofs that the culminating period of Roman history is to be classed among the leading, the significant, the modern periods of the world. There is universally current, I think, a pretty correct appreciation of the high development of the Rome of Cicero and Augustus; no one doubts that material civilization and the refinements of life were largely diffused in it; no one doubts that cultivation of mind and intelligence were widely diffused in it. Therefore, I will not occupy time by showing that Cicero corresponded with his friends in the style of the most accomplished, the most easy letter-writers of modern times; that Cæsar did not write history like Sir Walter Raleigh. The great

period of Rome is, perhaps, on the whole, the greatest, the fullest, the most significant period on record; it is certainly a greater, a fuller period than the age of Pericles. It is an infinitely larger school for the men reared in it; the relations of life are immeasurably multiplied, the events which happen are on an immeasurably grander scale. The facts, the spectacle of this Roman world, then, are immense: let us see how far the literature, the interpretation of the facts, has been adequate.

Let us begin with a great poet, a great philosopher, Lucretius. In the case of Thucydides I called attention to the fact that his habit of mind, his mode of dealing with questions, were modern; that they were those of an enlightened, reflecting man among ourselves. Let me call attention to the exhibition in Lucretius of a modern *feeling* not less remarkable than the modern *thought*

in Thucydides. The predominance of thought, of reflection, in modern epochs is not without its penalties; in the unsound, in the over-tasked, in the oversensitive, it has produced the most painful, the most lamentable results; it has produced a state of feeling unknown to less enlightened but perhaps healthier epochs—the feeling of depression, the feeling of *ennui.* Depression and *ennui;* these are the characteristics stamped on how many of the representative works of modern times! they are also the characteristics stamped on the poem of Lucretius. One of the most powerful, the most solemn passages of the work of Lucretius, one of the most powerful, the most solemn passages in the literature of the whole world, is the well-known conclusion of the third book. With masterly touches he exhibits the lassitude, the incurable tedium which pursue men in their amuse-

ments; with indignant irony he upbraids them for the cowardice with which they cling to a life which for most is miserable; to a life which contains, for the most fortunate, nothing but the old dull round of the same unsatisfying objects for ever presented. "A man rushes abroad," he says, "because he is sick of being at home; and suddenly comes home again because he finds himself no whit easier abroad. He posts as fast as his horses can take him to his country-seat; when he has got there he hesitates what to do; or he throws himself down moodily to sleep, and seeks forgetfulness in that; or he makes the best of his way back to town again with the same speed as he fled from it. Thus every one flies from himself." What a picture of *ennui*! of the disease of the most modern societies, the most advanced civilizations! "O man," he exclaims again, "the lights of the world,

Scipio, Homer, Epicurus, are dead; wilt thou hesitate and fret at dying, whose life is well-nigh dead whilst thou art yet alive; who consumest in sleep the greater part of thy span, and when awake dronest and ceasest not to dream; and carriest about a mind troubled with baseless fear, and canst not find what it is that aileth thee when thou staggerest like a drunken wretch in the press of thy cares, and welterest hither and thither in the unsteady wandering of thy spirit!" And again: "I have nothing more than you have already seen," he makes Nature say to man, "to invent for your amusement; *eadem sunt omnia semper*—all things continue the same for ever."

Yes, Lucretius is modern; but is he adequate? And how can a man adequately interpret the activity of his age when he is not in sympathy with it? Think of the varied, the abundant, the

wide spectacle of the Roman life of his day; think of its fulness of occupation, its energy of effort. From these Lucretius withdraws himself, and bids his disciples to withdraw themselves; he bids them to leave the business of the world, and to apply themselves "*naturam cognoscere rerum*—to learn the nature of things;" but there is no peace, no cheerfulness for him either in the world from which he comes, or in the solitude to which he goes. With stern effort, with gloomy despair, he seems to rivet his eyes on the elementary reality, the naked framework of the world, because the world in its fulness and movement is too exciting a spectacle for his discomposed brain. He seems to feel the spectacle of it at once terrifying and alluring; and to deliver himself from it he has to keep perpetually repeating his formula of disenchantment and annihilation. In reading him, you

understand the tradition which represents him as having been driven mad by a poison administered as a love-charm by his mistress, and as having composed his great work in the intervals of his madness. Lucretius is, therefore, overstrained, gloom-weighted, morbid; and he who is morbid is no adequate interpreter of his age.

I pass to Virgil; to the poetical name which of all poetical names has perhaps had the most prodigious fortune; the name which for Dante, for the Middle Age, represented the perfection of classical antiquity. The perfection of classical antiquity Virgil does not represent; but far be it from me to add my voice to those which have decried his genius; nothing that I shall say is, or can ever be, inconsistent with a profound, an almost affectionate veneration for him. But with respect to him, as with respect to Lucretius, I shall freely ask the ques-

tion, *Is he adequate?* Does he represent the epoch in which he lived, the mighty Roman world of his time, as the great poets of the great epoch of Greek life represented theirs, in all its fulness, in all its significance?

From the very form itself of his great poem, the Æneid, one would be led to augur that this was impossible. The epic form, as a form for representing contemporary or nearly contemporary events, has attained, in the poems of Homer, an unmatched, an immortal success; the epic form as employed by learned poets for the reproduction of the events of a past age has attained a very considerable success. But for *this* purpose, for the poetic treatment of the events of a *past* age, the epic form is a less vital form than the dramatic form. The great poets of the modern period of Greece are accordingly, as we have seen, the *dramatic* poets. The chief of

these—Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes—have survived: the distinguished epic poets of the same period —Panyasis, Choerilus, Antimachus—though praised by the Alexandrian critics, have perished in a common destruction with the undistinguished. And what is the reason of this? It is, that the dramatic form exhibits, above all, *the actions of man as strictly determined by his thoughts and feelings;* it exhibits, therefore, what may be always accessible, always intelligible, always interesting. But the epic form takes a wider range; it represents not only the thought and passion of man, that which is universal and eternal, but also the forms of outward life, the fashion of manners, the aspects of nature, that which is local or transient. To exhibit adequately what is local and transient, only a witness, a contemporary, can suffice. In the *reconstruction,* by learning and an-

tiquarian ingenuity, of the local and transient features of a past age, in their representation by one who is not a witness or contemporary, it is impossible to feel the liveliest kind of interest. What, for instance, is the most interesting portion of the Æneid,—the portion where Virgil seems to be moving most freely, and therefore to be most animated, most forcible? Precisely that portion which has most a *dramatic* character; the episode of Dido; that portion where locality and manners are nothing—where persons and characters are everything. We might presume beforehand, therefore, that if Virgil, at a time when contemporary epic poetry was no longer possible, had been inspired to represent human life in its fullest significance, he would not have selected the epic form. Accordingly, what is, in fact, the character of the poem, the frame of mind of the poet?

Has the poem the depth, the completeness of the poems of Æschylus or Sophocles, of those adequate and consummate representations of human life? Has the poet the serious cheerfulness of Sophocles, of a man who has mastered the problem of human life, who knows its gravity, and is therefore serious, but who knows that he comprehends it, and is therefore cheerful? Over the whole of the great poem of Virgil, over the whole Æneid, there rests an ineffable melancholy: not a rigid, a moody gloom, like the melancholy of Lucretius; no, a sweet, a touching sadness, but still a sadness; a melancholy which is at once a source of charm in the poem, and a testimony to its incompleteness. Virgil, as Niebuhr has well said, expressed no affected self-disparagement, but the haunting, the irresistible self-dissatisfaction of his heart, when he desired on his death-bed that his poem might

be destroyed. A man of the most delicate genius, the most rich learning, but of weak health, of the most sensitive nature, in a great and overwhelming world; conscious, at heart, of his inadequacy for the thorough spiritual mastery of that world and its interpretation in a work of art; conscious of this inadequacy—the one inadequacy, the one weak place in the mighty Roman nature! This suffering, this graceful-minded, this finely-gifted man is the most beautiful, the most attractive figure in literary history; but he is not the adequate interpreter of the great period of Rome.

We come to Horace: and if Lucretius, if Virgil want cheerfulness, Horace wants seriousness. I go back to what I said of Menander: as with Menander so is it with Horace: the men of taste, the men of cultivation, the men of the world are enchanted with him; he has

not a prejudice, not an illusion, not a blunder. True! yet the best men in the best ages have never been thoroughly satisfied with Horace. If human life were complete without faith, without enthusiasm, without energy, Horace, like Menander, would be the perfect interpreter of human life: but it is not; to the best, to the most living sense of humanity, it is not; and because it is not, Horace is inadequate. Pedants are tiresome, men of reflection and enthusiasm are unhappy and morbid; therefore Horace is a sceptical man of the world. Men of action are without ideas, men of the world are frivolous and sceptical; therefore Lucretius is plunged in gloom and in stern sorrow. So hard, nay, so impossible for most men is it to develop themselves in their entireness; to rejoice in the variety, the movement of human life with the children of the world; to be serious over the depth, the

significance of human life with the wise! Horace warms himself before the transient fire of human animation and human pleasure while he can, and is only serious when he reflects that the fire must soon go out:—

"Damna tamen celeres reparant coelestia lunae:
Nos, ubi decidimus—"

"For nature there is renovation, but for man there is none!"—it is exquisite, but it is not interpretative and fortifying.

In the Roman world, then, we have found a highly modern, a deeply significant, an interesting period—a period more significant and more interesting, because fuller, than the great period of Greece; but we have not a commensurate literature. In Greece we have seen a highly modern, a most significant and interesting period, although on a scale of less magnitude and importance than the great period of Rome; but then,

co-existing with the great epoch of Greece there is what is wanting to that of Rome, a commensurate, an interesting literature.

The intellectual history of our race cannot be clearly understood without applying to other ages, nations, and literatures the same method of inquiry which we have been here imperfectly applying to what is called classical antiquity. But enough has at least been said, perhaps, to establish the absolute, the enduring interest of Greek literature, and, above all, of Greek poetry.

DANTE AND BEATRICE

DANTE AND BEATRICE

THOSE critics who allegorize the *Divine Comedy,* who exaggerate, or, rather, who mistake the supersensual element in Dante's work, who reduce to nothing the sensible and human element, are hardly worth refuting. They know nothing of the necessary laws under which poetic genius works, of the inevitable conditions under which the creations of poetry are produced. But, in their turn, those other critics err hardly less widely, who exaggerate, or, rather, who mistake the human and real element in Dante's poem; who see, in such a passion as that of Dante for Beatrice, an affection belonging to the sphere of actual domestic life, fitted to sustain the wear and tear of our ordi-

nary daily existence. Into the error of those second critics an accomplished recent translator of Dante, Mr. Theodore Martin, seems to me to have fallen. He has ever present to his mind, when he speaks of the Beatrice whom Dante adored, Wordsworth's picture of—

> The perfect woman, nobly planned
> To warm, to comfort, and command;
> And yet a spirit still, and bright
> With something of an angel light.

He is ever quoting these lines in connexion with Dante's Beatrice; ever assimilating to this picture Beatrice as Dante conceived her; ever attributing to Dante's passion a character identical with that of the affection which Wordsworth, in the poem from which these lines are taken, meant to portray. The affection here portrayed by Wordsworth is, I grant, a substantial human affection, inhabiting the domain of real life, at the same time that it is poetical

and beautiful. But in order to give this flesh-and-blood character to Dante's passion for Beatrice, what a task has Mr. Martin to perform! how much he is obliged to imagine! how much to shut his eyes to, or to disbelieve! Not perceiving that the vital impulse of Dante's soul is towards reverie and spiritual vision; that the task Dante sets himself is not the task of reconciling poetry and reality, of giving to each its due part, of supplementing the one by the other; but the task of sacrificing the world to the spirit, of making the spirit all in all, of effacing the world in presence of the spirit—Mr. Martin seeks to find a Dante admirable and complete in the life of the world as well as in the life of the spirit; and when he cannot find him, he invents him. Dante saw the world, and used in his poetry what he had seen; for he was a born artist. But he was essentially aloof from the

world, and not complete in the life of the world; for he was a born spiritualist and solitary. Keeping in our minds this, his double character, we may seize the exact truth as to his relations with Beatrice, and steer a right course between the error of those who deliteralize them too much, on the one hand, and that of those who literalize them too much, on the other.

The *Divine Comedy,* I have already said, is no allegory, and Beatrice no mere personification of theology. Mr. Martin is quite right in saying that Beatrice is the Beatrice whom men turned round to gaze at in the streets of Florence; that she is no "allegorical phantom," no "fiction purely ideal." He is quite right in saying that Dante "worships no phantoms," that his passion for Beatrice was a real passion, and that his love-poetry does not deal "in the attributes of celestial charms." He

was an artist—one of the greatest of artists; and art abhors what is vague, hollow, and impalpable.

Enough to make this fully manifest we have in the *Vita Nuova.* Dante there records how, a boy of ten, he first saw Beatrice, a girl of nine, dressed in crimson; how, a second time, he saw her, nine years later, passing along the street, dressed in white, between two ladies older than herself, and how she saluted him. He records how afterwards she once denied him her salutation; he records the profound impression which, at her father's death, the grief and beauty of Beatrice made on all those who visited her; he records his meeting with her at a party after her marriage, his emotion, and how some ladies present, observing his emotion, "made a mock of him to that most gentle being;" he records her death, and how, a year afterwards, some

gentlemen found him, on the anniversary of her death, "sketching an angel on his tablets." He tells us how, a little later, he had a vision of the dead Beatrice "arrayed in the same crimson robe in which she had originally appeared to my eyes, and she seemed as youthful as on the day I saw her first." He mentions how, one day, the sight of some pilgrims passing along a particular street in Florence brought to his mind the thought that perhaps these pilgrims, coming from a far country, had never even heard the name of her who filled his thoughts so entirely. And even in the *Divine Comedy,* composed many years afterwards, and treating of the glorified Beatrice only, one distinct trait of the earthly Beatrice is still preserved—her smile; the *santo riso* of the *Purgatory,* the *dolce riso* of the *Paradise.*

Yes, undoubtedly there was a real

Beatrice, whom Dante had seen living and moving before him, and for whom he had felt a passion. This basis of fact and reality he took from the life of the outward world: this basis was indispensable to him, for he was an artist.

But this basis was enough for him as an artist: to have seen Beatrice two or three times, to have spoken to her two or three times, to have felt her beauty, her charm; to have had the emotion of her marriage, her death—this was enough. Art requires a basis of fact, but it also desires to treat this basis of fact with the utmost freedom; and this desire for the freest handling of its object is even thwarted when its object is too near, and too real. To have had his relations with Beatrice more positive, intimate, and prolonged, to have had an affection for her into which there entered more of the life of this world, would have even somewhat

impeded, one may say, Dante's free use of these relations for the purpose of art. And the artist nature in him was in little danger of being thus impeded; for he was a born solitary.

Thus the conditions of art do not make it necessary that Dante's relations with Beatrice should have been more close and real than the *Vita Nuova* represents them; and the conditions of Dante's own nature do not make it probable. Not the less do such admirers of the poet as Mr. Martin—misconceiving the essential characteristic of chivalrous passion in general, and of Dante's divinization of Beatrice in particular, misled by imagining this "worship for woman," as they call it, to be something which it was not, something involving modern relations in social life between the two sexes—insist upon making out of Dante's adoration of Beatrice a substantial modern love-story, and of ar-

ranging Dante's real life so as to turn it into the proper sort of real life for a "worshipper of woman" to lead. The few real incidents of Dante's passion, enumerated in the *Vita Nuova,* sufficient to give to his great poem the basis which it required, are far too scanty to give to such a love-story as this the basis which it requires; therefore they must be developed and amplified. Beatrice was a living woman, and Dante had seen her; but she must become

> The creature not too bright and good
> For human nature's daily food,

of Wordsworth's poem: she must become "pure flesh and blood—beautiful, yet substantial," and "moulded of that noble humanity wherewith Heaven blesses, not unfrequently, our common earth." Dante had saluted Beatrice, had spoken to her; but this is not enough: he has surely omitted to "re-

cord particulars:" it is "scarcely credible that he should not have found an opportunity of directly declaring his attachment;" for "in position, education, and appearance he was a man worth any woman," and his face "at that time of his life must have been eminently engaging." Therefore "it seems strange that his love should not have found its issue in marriage;" for "he loved Beatrice as a man loves, and with the passion that naturally perseveres to the possession of its mistress."

However, his love did *not* find its issue in marriage. Beatrice married Messer Simone dei Bardi, to whom, says Mr. Martin, "her hand had been, perhaps lightly or to please her parents, pledged, in ignorance of the deep and noble passion which she had inspired in the young poet's heart." But she certainly could not "have been insensible to his profound tenderness and passion";

although whether "she knew of it before her marriage," and whether "she, either then or afterwards, gave it her countenance and approval, and returned it in any way, and in what degree"—questions which, Mr. Martin says, "naturally suggest themselves"—are, he confesses, questions for solving which "the materials are most scanty and unsatisfactory." "Unquestionably," he adds, "it startles and grieves us to find Beatrice taking part with her friends "in laughing at Dante when he was overcome at first meeting her after her marriage." "But there may," he thinks, "have been causes for this—causes for which, in justice to her, allowance must be made, even as we see that Dante made it." Then, again, as to Messer Simone dei Bardi's feelings about this attachment of Dante to his wife. "It is true," says Mr. Martin, "that we have no direct information on this point;" but "the love

of Dante was of an order too pure and noble to occasion distrust, even if the purity of Beatrice had not placed her above suspicion;" but Dante "did what only a great and manly nature could have done—he triumphed over his pain; he uttered no complaint; his regrets were buried within his own heart." "At the same time," Mr. Martin thinks, "it is contrary to human nature that a love unfed by any tokens of favour should retain all its original force; and without wrong either to Beatrice or Dante, we may conclude that an understanding was come to between them, which in some measure soothed his heart, if it did not satisfy it." And "sooner or later, before Beatrice died, we cannot doubt that there came a day when words passed between them which helped to reconcile Dante to the doom that severed her from his side during her all too brief sojourn on earth, when

the pent-up heart of the poet swept down the barriers within which it had so long struggled, and he

> Caught up the whole of love, and utter'd it,
> Then bade adieu for ever,

if not to her, yet to all those words which it was no longer meet should be spoken to another's wife."

But Dante married, as well as Beatrice; and so Dante's married life has to be *arranged* also. "It is," says Mr. Martin, "only those who have observed little of human nature, or of their own hearts, who will think that Dante's marriage with Gemma Donati argues against the depth of sincerity of his first love. Why should he not have sought the solace and the support of a generous woman's nature, who, knowing all the truth, was yet content with such affection as he was able to bring to a second love? Nor was that necessarily small. Ardent and affectionate as his nature

was, the sympathies of such a woman must have elicited from him a satisfactory response; while, at the same time, without prejudice to the wife's claim on his regard, he might entertain his heavenward dream of the departed Beatrice." The tradition is, however, that Dante did not live happily with his wife; and some have thought that he means to cast a disparaging reflection on his marriage in a passage of the *Purgatory*. I need not say that this sort of thing would never do for Mr. Martin's hero—that hero who can do nothing "inconsistent with the purest respect to her who had been the wedded wife of another, on the one hand, or with his regard for the mother of his children, on the other." Accordingly, "are we to assume," Mr. Martin cries, "that the woman who gave herself to him in the full knowledge that she was not the bride of his imagination, was not regarded by him with the esteem

which her devotion was calculated to inspire." It is quite impossible. "Dante was a true-hearted gentleman, and could never have spoken slightingly of her on whose breast he had found comfort amid many a sorrow, and who had borne to him a numerous progeny—the last a Beatrice." Donna Gemma was a "generous and devoted woman," and she and Dante "thoroughly understood each other."

All this has, as applied to real personages, the grave defect of being entirely of Mr. Martin's own imagining. But it has a still graver defect, I think, as applied to Dante, in being so singularly inappropriate to its object. The grand, impracticable Solitary, with keen senses and ardent passions—for nature had made him an artist, and art must be, as Milton says, "sensuous and impassioned"—but with an irresistible bent to the inward life, the life of imagination,

vision, and ecstasy; with an inherent impatience of the outward life, the life of distraction, jostling, mutual concession; this man "of a humour which made him hard to get on with," says Petrarch; "melancholy and pensive," says Boccaccio; "by nature abstracted and taciturn, seldom speaking unless he was questioned, and often so absorbed in his own reflections that he did not hear the questions which were put to him;" who could not live with the Florentines, who could not live with Gemma Donati, who could not live with Can Grande della Scala; this lover of Beatrice, but of Beatrice a vision of his youth, hardly at all in contact with him in actual life, vanished from him soon, with whom his imagination could deal freely, whom he could divinize into a fit subject for the spiritual longing which filled him—this Dante is transformed, in Mr. Martin's hands, into the hero of a sentimental, but

strictly virtuous, novel! To make out Dante to have been eminent for a wise, complete conduct of his outward life, seems to me as unimportant as it is impossible. I can quite believe the tradition which represents him as not having lived happily with his wife, and attributes her not having joined him in his exile to this cause. I can even believe, without difficulty, an assertion of Boccaccio which excites Mr. Martin's indignation, that Dante's conduct, even in mature life, was at times exceedingly irregular. We know how the followers of the spiritual life tend to be antinomian in what belongs to the outward life: they do not attach much importance to such irregularity themselves; it is their fault, as complete men, that they do not; it is the fault of the spiritual life, as a complete life, that it allows this tendency: by dint of despising the outward life, it loses the control of this life, and

of itself when in contact with it. My present business, however, is not to praise or blame Dante's practical conduct of his life, but to make clear his peculiar mental and spiritual constitution. This, I say, disposed him to absorb himself in the inner life, wholly to humble and efface before this the outward life. We may see this in the passage of the *Purgatory* where he makes Beatrice reprove him for his backslidings after she, his visible symbol of spiritual perfection, had vanished from his eyes.

"For a while"—she says of him to the "pious substances," the angels,—"for a while with my countenance I upheld him; showing to him my youthful eyes, with me I led him, turning towards the right way.

"Soon as I came on the threshold of my second age, and changed my life, this

man took himself from me and gave himself to others.

"When that I had mounted from flesh to spirit, and beauty and spirit were increased unto me, I was to him less dear and less acceptable.

"He turned his steps to go in a way not true, pursuing after false images of good, which fulfil nothing of the promises which they give.

"Neither availed it me that I obtained inspirations to be granted me, whereby, both in dream and otherwise, I called him back; so little heed paid he to them.

"So deep he fell, that, for his salvation all means came short, except to show him the people of perdition.

"The high decree of God would be broken, could Lethe be passed, and that so fair aliment tasted, without some scot paid of repentance, which pours forth tears."

Here, indeed, and in a somewhat similar passage of the next canto, Mr. Martin thinks that the "obvious allusion" is to certain moral shortcomings, occasional slips, of which (though he treats Boccaccio's imputation as monstrous and incredible) "Dante, with his strong and ardent passions, having, like meaner men, to fight the perennial conflict between flesh and spirit," had sometimes, he supposes, been guilty. An Italian commentator gives at least as true an interpretation of these passages when he says that "in them Dante makes Beatrice, as the representative of theology, lament that he should have left the study of divinity—in which, by the grace of Heaven, he might have attained admirable proficiency—to immerse himself in civil affairs with the parties of Florence." But the real truth is, that all the life of the world, its

pleasures, its business, its parties, its politics, all is alike hollow and miserable to Dante in comparison with the inward life, the ecstasy of the divine vision; every way which does not lead straight towards this is for him a *via non vera;* every good thing but this is for him a false image of good, fulfilling none of the promises which it gives; for the excellency of the knowledge of this he counts all things but loss. Beatrice leads him to this; herself symbolizes for him the ineffable beauty and purity for which he longs. Even to Dante at twenty-one, when he yet sees the living Beatrice with his eyes, she already symbolizes this for him, she is already not the "creature not too bright and good" of Wordsworth, but a spirit far more than a woman; to Dante at twenty-five composing the *Vita Nuova* she is still more a spirit; to Dante at fifty,

when his character has taken its bent, when his genius is come to its perfection, when he is composing his immortal poem, she is a spirit altogether.

OBERMANN

OBERMANN

THE most recent edition of *Obermann*[1] lies before me, the date on its title-page being 1863. It is, I believe, the fourth edition which has been published; the book made its first appearance in 1804; three editions, and not large editions, have sufficed for the demand of sixty years. Yet the book has lived, though with but this obscure life, and is not likely to die. Madame George Sand and Monsieur Sainte-Beuve have spoken in prose much and excellently of the book and its author. It may be in the recollection of some who read this that I have spoken of *Obermann* in verse, if not well, at least

[1] OBERMANN.—Par De Senancour. Nouvelle édition, revue et corrigée avec une Préface, par George Sand. Charpentier, Paris, 1863.

abundantly. It is to be wished, however, that Obermann should also speak to English readers for himself; and my present design is to take those two or three points where he is most significant and interesting, and to present some of his deliverances on those points in his own words.

It may be convenient, however, that first I should repeat here the short sketch which I have already given elsewhere of the uneventful life of the personage whom we call Obermann. His real name is Senancour. In the book which occupies us,—a volume of letters of which the writer, calling himself Obermann, and writing chiefly from Switzerland, delivers his thoughts about God, nature, and the human soul,—it is Senancour himself who speaks under Obermann's name. Etienne Pivert de Senancour, a Frenchman, although having in his nature much that we are ac-

customed to consider as by no means French, was born in 1770, was trained for the priesthood, and passed some time in the seminary of St. Sulpice, broke away from his training and country to live some years in Switzerland, where he married, came back to France in middle life, and followed thenceforward the career of a man of letters, but with hardly any fame or success. His marriage was not a happy one. He died an old man in 1846, desiring that on his grave might be placed these words only: "*Eternité, deviens mon asile.*"

Of the letters of Obermann, the writer's profound inwardness, his austere and sad sincerity, and his delicate feeling for nature, are, as I have elsewhere remarked, the distinguishing characteristics. His constant inwardness, his unremitting occupation with that question which haunted St. Bernard—*Bern-*

arde, ad quid venisti?—distinguish him from Goethe and Wordsworth, whose study of this question is relieved by the thousand distractions of a poetic interest in nature and in man. His severe sincerity distinguishes him from Rousseau, Chateaubriand, or Byron, who in their dealing with this question are so often attitudinising and thinking of the effect of what they say on the public. His exquisite feeling for nature, though always dominated by his inward self-converse and by his melancholy, yet distinguishes him from the men simply absorbed in philosophical or religious concerns, and places him in the rank of men of poetry and imagination. Let me try to show these three main characteristics of Senancour from his own words.

A Frenchman, coming immediately after the eighteenth century and the French Revolution, too clear-headed and

austere for any such sentimental Catholic reaction as that with which Chateaubriand cheated himself, and yet, from the very profoundness and meditativeness of his nature, religious, Senancour felt to the uttermost the bare and bleak spiritual atmosphere into which he was born. Neither to a German nor to an Englishman, perhaps, would such a sense of absolute religious denudation have then been possible, or such a plainness and even crudity, therefore, in their way of speaking of it. Only to a Frenchman were these possible; but amid wars, bustle, and the glory of the *grande nation* few Frenchmen had meditativeness and seriousness enough for them. Senancour was of a character to feel his spiritual position, to feel it without dream or illusion, and to feel, also, that in the absence of any real inward basis life was weariness and vanity, and the ordinary considerations

so confidently urged to induce a man to master himself and to be busy in it, quite hollow.

"People keep talking," says he, "of doing with energy that which ought to be done; but, amidst all this parade of firmness, *tell me, then, what it is that ought to be done.* For my part I do not know; and I venture to suspect that a good many others are in the same state of ignorance."

He was born with a passion for order and harmony, and a belief in them; his being so utterly divested of all conventional beliefs, makes this single elementary belief of his the more weighty and impressive.

"May we not say that the tendency to order forms an essential part of our propensities, our *instinct,* just like the tendency to self-preservation, or to the reproduction of the species? Is it noth-

ing, to live with the calm and the security of the just?"

And therefore, he concludes, "inasmuch as man had this feeling of order planted in him, inasmuch as it was in his nature, the right course would have been to try and make every individual man sensible of it and obedient to it." But what has been done? Since the beginning of the world, instead of having recourse to this innate feeling, the guides of mankind have uniformly sought to control human conduct by means of supernatural hopes, supernatural terrors, thus misleading man's intelligence, and debasing his soul. "*Depuis trente siècles, les résultats sont dignes de la sagesse des moyens.*" What are called *the virtues,* "are laws of nature as necessary to man as the laws of his bodily senses." Instead of teaching men to feel this, instead of de-

veloping in them that sentiment of order and that consciousness of the divine which are the native possession of our race, Paganism and Christianity alike have tampered with man's mind and heart, and wrought confusion in them.

"Conquerors, slaves, poets, pagan priests, and nurses, succeeded in disfiguring the traditions of primitive wisdom by dint of mixing races, destroying memorials, explaining allegories and making nonsense of them, abandoning the profound and true meaning in order to discover in them absurd ideas which might inspire wonder and awe, and personifying abstract beings in order to have plenty of objects of worship. The principle of life—that which was intelligence, light, the eternal—became nothing more than the husband of Juno; harmony, fruitfulness, the bond of all living things, became nothing more than the mistress of Adonis; imperishable

wisdom came to be distinguished only through her owl; the great ideas of immortality and retribution consisted in the fear of turning a wheel, and the hope of strolling in a green wood. The indivisible divinity was parcelled into a hierarchical multitude torn by miserable passions; the fruit of the genius of primitive mankind, the emblems of the laws of the universe, had degenerated into superstitious usages which the children in great cities turned into ridicule."

Paul at Athens might have set forth, in words not unlike these, the degradation of the Unknown God; now for the religion of which Paul was a minister:—

"A moral belief was wanted, because pure morality was gone out of men's knowledge; dogmas were wanted, which should be profound and perhaps unfathomable, but not by any means dogmas which should be absurd, because intelligence was spreading more and

more. All religions being sunk into degradation, there was needed a religion of majesty, and answering to man's effort to elevate his soul by the idea of a God of all things. There were needed religious rites which should be imposing, not too common, objects of desire, mysterious yet simple; rites which seemed to belong to a higher world, and which yet a man's reason should accept as naturally as his heart. There was needed, in short, what only a great genius could institute, and what I can only catch glimpses of.

"But you have fabricated, patched, experimented, altered; renewed I know not what incoherent multitude of trivial ceremonies and dogmas, more fitted to scandalize the weak than to edify them. This dubious mixture you have joined to a morality sometimes false, often exceedingly noble, and almost always austere; the one single point in which you

have shown sagacity. You pass some hundreds of years in arranging all this by inspiration; and your slowly built work, industriously repaired, but with a radical fault in plan, is so made as to last hardly longer than the time during which you have been accomplishing it."

There is a passage to be meditated by the new Œcumenical Council! Not that Senancour has a trace of the Voltairian bitterness against Christianity, or against Catholicism which to him represented Christianity:

"So far am I from having any prejudice against Christianity, that I deplore, I may say, what the majority of its zealous adherents never themselves think of deploring. I could willingly join them in lamenting the loss of Christianity; but there is this difference between us, that they regret it in the form into which it settled, nay, in the form, even, which it wore a century ago;

whereas, I cannot consider such a Christianity as that was to be much worthy of regret."

He owns that religion has done much; but, "si la religion a fait des grandes choses, *c'est avec des moyens immenses.*" Disposing of such means, it ought to have done much more. Remark, he says, that for the educated class religion is one of the weakest of the motive-powers they live by; and then ask yourself whether it is not absurd that there should be only a tenth part of our race educated. That religion should be of use as some restraint to the ignorant and brutal mass of mankind, shows, he thinks, not so much the beneficence of religion as the state of utter confusion and misery into which mankind has, in spite of religion, drifted:—

"I admit that the laws of civil society prove to be not restraint enough for this

multitude to which we give no training, about which we never trouble our heads, which we bring into the world and then leave to the chance of ignorant passions and of habits of low debauchery. This only proves that there is mere wretchedness and confusion under the apparent calm of vast states; that the science of politics, in the true sense of the term, is a stranger to our world, where diplomacy and financial administration produce prosperity to be sung in poems, and win victories to figure in gazettes."

This concern for the state and prospects of what are called the masses is perpetually recurring with Senancour; it came to him from his singular lucidity and plain-dealing, for it was no commonplace with his time and contemporaries, as it is with ours. "There are men," he says, and he was one of them, "who cannot be happy except among men who are contented; who feel in

their own persons all the enjoyment and suffering they witness, and who cannot be satisfied with themselves except they contribute to the order of the world and to man's welfare." "Arrange one's life how one will," he says in another place, "who can answer for its being any happier, so long as it is and must be *sans accord avec les choses, et passée au milieu des peuples souffrans?*" This feeling returns again and again:—

"Inequality is in the nature of things; but you have increased it out of all measure, when you ought, on the contrary, to have studied to reduce it. The prodigies of your industry must surely be a baneful work of superfluity, if you have neither time nor faculties for doing so many things which are indispensable. The mass of mankind is brutal, foolish, given over to its passions; *all your ills come from this cause.* Either do not bring men into existence, or, if you do,

give them an existence which is human."

But as deep as his sense that the time was out of joint, was the feeling of this Hamlet that he had no power to set it right. *Vos douleurs ont flétri mon âme,* he says:—

"Your miseries have worn out my soul; they are intolerable, because they are objectless. Our pleasures are illusory, fugitive; a day suffices for knowing them and abandoning them. I enquired of myself for happiness, but with my eyes open; I saw that it was not made for the man who was isolated: I proposed it to those who stood round me; they had not leisure to concern themselves with it. I asked the multitude in its wear and tear of misery, and the great of earth under their load of ennui; they answered me: We are wretched to-day, but we shall enjoy ourselves to-morrow. For my part, I know that the day which is coming will only tread in

the footsteps of the day which is gone before."

But a root of failure, powerlessness, and ennui, there certainly was in the constitution of Senancour's own nature; so that, unfavourable as may have been his time, we should err in attributing to any outward circumstances the whole of the discouragement by which he is pervaded. He himself knew this well, and he never seeks to hide it from us. "Il y a dans moi un dérangement," says he; "*c'est le désordre des ennuis.*"

"I was born to be not happy. You know those dark days, bordering on the frosts of winter, when mists hang heavily about the very dawn, and day begins only by threatening lines of a lurid light upon the masses of cloud. That glooming veil, those stormy squalls, those uncertain gleams, that whistling of the wind through trees which bend and shiver, those prolonged throes like fun-

eral groans—you see in them the morning of life; at noon, cooler storms and more steadily persistent; at evening, thicker darkness still, and the day of man is brought to an end."

No representation of Senancour can, however, be complete without some of the gleams which relieved this discouragement. Besides the inwardness, besides the sincerity, besides the renouncement, there was the poetic emotion and the deep feeling for nature.

"And I, too, I have my moments of forgetfulness, of strength, of grandeur; I have desires and yearnings that know no limit. But I behold the monuments of effaced generations; I see the flint wrought by the hand of man, and which will subsist a hundred centuries after him. I renounce the care for that which passes away, and the thought of a present which is already gone. I stand still, and marvel; I listen to what subsists

yet, I would fain hear what will go on subsisting; in the movement of the forest, in the murmur of the pines, I seek to catch some of the accents of the eternal tongue."

Nature, and the emotion caused by nature, inspire so many beautiful passages in Obermann's letters that one is embarrassed to make a choice among them. The following, with which we will end our extracts, is a morning and night-piece from the north end of the Lake of Neufchâtel, where the River Thiele enters the lake from Bienne, between Saint Blaise and Morat:—

"My window had remained open all night, as is my habit. Towards four o'clock in the morning I was wakened by the dawn, and by the scent of the hay which they had been cutting in the cool early hours by the light of the moon. I expected an ordinary view; but I had a moment of perfect astonish-

ment. The midsummer rains had kept up the waters which the melting snow in the Jura had previously swollen. The space between the lake and the Thiele was almost entirely flooded; the highest spots formed islands of pasture amidst the expanse of waters ruffled with the fresh breeze of morning. The waves of the lake could be made out in the distance, driven by the wind against the half-flooded bank. Some goats and cows, with their herdsman, who made a rustic music with a horn, were passing at the moment over a tongue of land left dry between the flooded plain and the Thiele. Stones set in the parts where it was worst going supported this natural causeway or filled up gaps in it; the pasture to which the docile animals were proceeding was not in sight, and to see their slow and irresolute advance, one would have said they were about to get out into the lake and be lost there.

The heights of Anet and the thick woods of Julemont rose out of the waters like a desert island without an inhabitant. The hilly chain of Vuilly edged the lake on the horizon. To the south, this chain stretched away behind the slopes of Montmirail; and farther on than all these objects, sixty leagues of eternal snows stamped the whole country with the inimitable majesty of those bold lines of nature which give to places sublimity."

He dines at the toll-house by the river-bank, and after passing the afternoon there, goes out again late in the evening:—

"The moon had not yet risen; my path lay beside the green waters of the Thiele. I had taken the key of my lodging that I might come in when I liked without being tied to a particular hour. But feeling inclined to muse, and finding the night so warm that there was no

hardship in being all night out of doors, I took the road to Saint Blaise. I left it at a little village called Marin, which has the lake to the south of it. I descended a steep bank, and got upon the shore of the lake where its ripple came up and expired. The air was calm; not a sail was to be seen on the lake. Every one was at rest; some in the forgetfulness of their toils, others in the forgetfulness of their sorrows. The moon rose; I remained there hours. Towards morning, the moon shed over earth and waters the ineffable melancholy of her last gleams. Nature seems unspeakably grand, when, plunged in a long reverie, one hears the washing of the waves upon a solitary strand, in the calm of a night still enkindled and luminous with the setting moon.

"Sensibility which no words can express, charm and torment of our vain years! vast consciousness of a nature

everywhere greater than we are, and everywhere impenetrable! all-embracing passion, ripened wisdom, delicious self-abandonment,—everything that a mortal heart can contain of life-weariness and yearning, I felt it all, I experienced it all, in this memorable night. I have made an ominous step towards the age of decline; I have swallowed up ten years of life at once. Happy the simple, whose heart is always young!''

There, in one of the hours which were at once the inspiration and the enervation of Senancour's life, we leave him. It is possible that an age, breaking with the past, and inclined to tell it the most naked truths, may take more pleasure than its predecessors in Obermann's bleak frankness, and may even give him a kind of celebrity. Nevertheless it may be predicted with certainty that his very celebrity, if he gets it, will have, like his life, something maimed, in-

complete, and unsuccessful about it; and that his intimate friends will still be but a few, as they have hitherto been. These few will never fail him.

SAINTE-BEUVE

SAINTE-BEUVE

THIS is neither the time nor the place to attempt any complete account of the remarkable man whose pen, busy to the end, and to the end charming and instructing us, has within the last few weeks dropped from his hand for ever. A few words are all that the occasion allows, and it is hard not to make them words of mere regret and eulogy. Most of what is at this moment written about him is in this strain, and very naturally; the world has some arrears to make up to him, and now, if ever, it feels this. Late, and as it were by accident, he came to his due estimation in France; here in England it is only within the last ten years that he can be said to have been publicly known at

all. We who write these lines knew him long and owed him much; something of that debt we will endeavour to pay, not, as we ourselves might be most inclined, by following the impulse of the hour and simply praising him, but, as he himself would have preferred, by recalling what in sum he chiefly was, and what is the essential scope of his effort and working.

Shortly before Sainte-Beuve's death appeared a new edition of his *Portraits Contemporains,* one of his earlier works, of which the contents date from 1832 and 1833, before his method and manner of criticism were finally formed. But the new edition is enriched with notes and retouches added as the volumes were going through the press, and which bring our communications with him down to these very latest months of his life. Among them is a comment on a letter of Madame George Sand, in which

she had spoken of the admiration excited by one of his articles. "I leave this as it stands," says he, "because the sense and the connection of the passage require it; but, *personne ne sait mieux que moi à quoi s'en tenir sur le mérite absolu de ces articles qui sont tout au plus, et même lorsqu'ils réussissent le mieux, des choses sensées dans un genre médiocre. Ce qu'ils ont eu d'alerte et d'à-propos à leur moment suffit à peine à expliquer ces exagérations de l'amitié. Réservons l'admiration pour les œuvres de poésie et d'art, pour les compositions élevées; la plus grande gloire du critique est dans l'approbation et dans l'estime des bons esprits.*"

This comment, which extends to his whole work as a critic, has all the good breeding and delicacy by which Sainte-Beuve's writing was distinguished, and it expresses, too, what was to a great extent, no doubt, his sincere conviction.

Like so many who have tried their hand at *œuvres de poésie et d'art,* his preference, his dream, his ideal, was there; the rest was comparatively journeyman-work, to be done well and estimably rather than ill and discreditably, and with precious rewards of its own, besides, in exercising the faculties and in keeping off ennui; but still work of an inferior order. Yet when one looks at the names on the title-page of the *Portraits Contemporains:* Chateaubriand, Béranger, Lamennais, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, George Sand,—names representing, in our judgment, very different degrees of eminence, but none of which we have the least inclination to disparage,—is it certain that the works of poetry and art to which these names are attached eclipse the work done by Sainte-Beuve? Could Sainte-Beuve have had what was no doubt his will, and in the line of the *Consolations* and

Volupté have produced works with the power and vogue of Lamartine's works, or Chateaubriand's, or Hugo's, would he have been more interesting to us to-day,—would he have stood permanently higher? We venture to doubt it. Works of poetry and art like Molière's and Milton's eclipse no doubt all productions of the order of the *Causeries du Lundi,* and the highest language of admiration may very properly be reserved for such works alone. Inferior works in the same kind have their moment of vogue when their admirers apply to them this language; there is a moment when a drama of Hugo's finds a public to speak of it as if it were Molière's, and a poem of Lamartine's finds a public to speak of it as if it were Milton's. At no moment will a public be found to speak of work like Sainte-Beuve's *Causeries* in such fashion; and if this alone were regarded, one might

allow oneself to leave to his work the humbler rank which he assigns to it. But the esteem inspired by his work remains and grows, while the vogue of all works of poetry and art but the best, and the high-pitched admiration which goes with vogue, diminish and disappear; and this redresses the balance. Five-and-twenty years ago it would have seemed absurd, in France, to place Sainte-Beuve, as a French author, on a level with Lamartine. Lamartine had at that time still his vogue, and though assuredly no Molière or Milton, had for the time of his vogue the halo which surrounds properly none but great poets like these. To this Sainte-Beuve cannot pretend, but what does Lamartine retain of it now? It would still be absurd to place Sainte-Beuve on a level with Molière or Milton; is it any longer absurd to place him on a level with Lamartine, or even above him? In

other words, excellent work in a lower kind counts in the long run above work which is short of excellence in a higher; first-rate criticism has a permanent value greater than that of any but first-rate works of poetry and art.

And Sainte-Beuve's criticism may be called first-rate. His curiosity was unbounded, and he was born a *naturalist*, carrying into letters, so often the mere domain of rhetoric and futile amusement, the ideas and methods of scientific natural inquiry. And this he did while keeping in perfection the ease of movement and charm of touch which belongs to letters properly so called, and which give them their unique power of universal penetration and of propagandism. Man, as he is, and as his history and the productions of his spirit show him, was the object of his study and interest; he strove to find the real data with which, in dealing with man

and his affairs, we have to do. Beyond this study he did not go,—to find the real data. But he was determined they should be the real data, and not fictitious and conventional data, if he could help it. This is what, in our judgment, distinguishes him, and makes his work of singular use and instructiveness. Most of us think that we already possess the data required, and have only to proceed to deal with human affairs in the light of them. This is, as is well known, a thoroughly English persuasion. It is what makes us such keen politicians; it is an honour to an Englishman, we say, to take part in political strife. Solomon says, on the other hand, "It is an honour to a man to cease from strife, but every fool will be meddling"; and Sainte-Beuve held with Solomon. Many of us, again, have principles and connections which are all in all to us, and we arrange data to suit them;—a

book, a character, a period of history, we see from a point of view given by our principles and connections, and to the requirements of this point of view we make the book, the character, the period, adjust themselves. Sainte-Beuve never did so, and criticised with unfailing acuteness those who did. *"Tocqueville arrivait avec son moule tout prêt; la réalité n'y répond pas, et les choses ne se prêtent pas à y entrer."*

M. de Tocqueville commands much more sympathy in England than his critic, and the very mention of him will awaken impressions unfavourable to Sainte-Beuve; for the French Liberals honour Tocqueville and at heart dislike Sainte-Beuve; and people in England always take their cue from the French Liberals. For that very reason have we boldly selected for quotation this criticism on him, because the course criticised in Tocqueville is precisely the

course with which an Englishman would sympathise, and which he would be apt to take himself; while Sainte-Beuve, in criticising him, shows just the tendency which is his characteristic, and by which he is of use to us. Tocqueville, as is well known, finds in the ancient *régime* all the germs of the centralisation which the French Revolution developed and established. This centralisation is his bugbear, as it is the bugbear of English Liberalism; and directly he finds it, the system where it appears is judged. Disliking, therefore, the French Revolution for its centralisation, and then finding centralisation in the ancient *régime* also, he at once sees in this discovery, "*mille motifs nouveaux de haïr l'ancien régime.*" How entirely does every Englishman abound here, as the French say, in Tocqueville's sense; how faithfully have all Englishmen repeated and re-echoed Tocqueville's book on the

ancient *régime* ever since it was published; how incapable are they of supplying, or of imagining the need of supplying, any corrective to it! But hear Sainte-Beuve:—

"Dans son effroi de la centralisation, l'auteur en vient à méconnaître de grands bienfaits d'équité dus à Richelieu et à Louis XIV. Homme du peuple ou bourgeois, sous Louis XIII., ne valait-il pas mieux avoir affaire à un intendant, à l'homme du roi, qu'à un gouverneur de province, à quelque duc d'Epernon? Ne maudissons pas ceux à qui nous devons les commencements de l'égalité devant la loi, la première ébauche de l'ordre moderne qui nous a affranchis, nous et nos pères, et le tiers-état tout entier, de cette quantité de petits tyrans qui couvraient le sol, grands seigneurs ou hobereaux."

The point of view of Sainte-Beuve is as little that of a glowing Revolutionist as it is that of a chagrined Liberal; it is that of a man who seeks the *truth* about the ancient *régime* and its institutions, and who instinctively seeks to

correct anything strained and *arranged* in the representation of them. *"Voyons les choses de l' histoire telles qu' elles se sont passées."*

At the risk of offending the prejudices of English readers we have thus gone for an example of Sainte-Beuve's essential method to a sphere where his application of it makes a keen impression, and created for him, in his lifetime, warm enemies and detractors. In that sphere it is not easily permitted to a man to be a *naturalist,* but a naturalist Sainte-Beuve could not help being always. Accidentally, at the end of his life, he gave delight to the Liberal opinion of his own country and ours by his famous speech in the Senate on behalf of free thought. He did but follow his instinct, however, of opposing, in whatever medium he was, the current of that medium when it seemed excessive and tyrannous. The extraordinary so-

cial power of French Catholicism makes itself specially felt in an assembly like the Senate. An elderly Frenchman of the upper class is apt to be, not unfrequently, a man of pleasure, reformed or exhausted, and the deference of such a personage to repression and Cardinals is generally excessive. This was enough to rouse Sainte-Beuve's opposition; but he would have had the same tendency to oppose the heady current of a medium where mere Liberalism reigned, where it was Professor Fawcett, and not the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who took the bit in his teeth.

That Sainte-Beuve stopped short at curiosity, at the desire to know things as they really are, and did not press on with faith and ardour to the various and immense applications of this knowledge which suggest themselves, and of which the accomplishment is reserved for the future, was due in part to his

character, but more to his date, his period, his circumstances. Let it be enough for a man to have served well one need of his age; and among politicians and rhetoricians to have been a naturalist, at a time when for any good and lasting work in government and literature our old conventional draught of the nature of things wanted in a thousand directions re-verifying and correcting.

RENAN

RENAN [1]

BURKE says, speaking of himself: "He has never professed himself a friend or an enemy to republics or to monarchies in the abstract. He thought that the circumstances and habits of every country, which it is always perilous and productive of the greatest calamities to force, are to decide upon the form of its government. There is nothing in his nature, his temper, or his faculties, which should make him an enemy to any republic, modern or ancient. Far from it. He has studied the form and spirit of republics very early in life; he has studied them with great attention; and with a mind undisturbed by affection or prejudice. But the result in his mind from that investigation has been and is, that neither England nor France, without infinite detriment to them, as well in the event as in the experiment, could be brought into a republican form, but that everything republi-

[1] La Réforme intellectuelle et morale de la France. Par Ernest Renan. Paris: 1871.

can which can be introduced with safety into either of them must be built upon a monarchy."

The name of Burke is not mentioned in M. Renan's book, but it is difficult to believe that Burke's publications of eighty years ago on the French Revolution, from which we have quoted the foregoing passage, were not in M. Renan's hands when he wrote his recent work. If it was so, it detracts nothing from M. Renan's originality; a man of his powers cannot but be original in the treatment of his subject, and to have read and agreed with Burke will not make him less so. But the similarity of the point of view strikes the reader in almost every page; and certainly it will be no bad effect of M. Renan's book if it sends us back to those masterpieces of thinking and eloquence, the *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* the *Letter to a Member of the National As-*

sembly, and the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.* They are far too little read. They need to be received with discrimination and judgment, and to common liberalism they can never be acceptable; yet so rich is their instructiveness that a serious politician could hardly make a better resolve than to read them through once every year.

"You have industriously destroyed all the opinions and prejudices, and as far as in you lay, all the instincts which support government." "You might, if you pleased, have profited by our example. You had the elements of a constitution very nearly as good as could be wished. You possessed in some parts the walls, and in all the foundations, of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls, you might have built on those old foundations. You had all these advantages in your ancient States; but you chose to act as if you had never been moulded into civil society, and had everything to begin anew." "Rousseau was your canon of holy writ."

These sentences are Burke's, and never surely could he have desired a better testimony to his wisdom than for a man like M. Renan to say eighty years afterwards, with the France of the present moment before his eyes:

"If no more had been done at the Revolution than to call together the States-General, to regularise them, to make them annual, all would have been right. But the false policy of Rousseau won the day. It was resolved to make a constitution *à priori*. People failed to remark that England, the most constitutional of countries, has never had a written constitution, drawn out in black and white." (P. 7.)

That the rights of its history do more for a society than the rights of man, that the mere will of the majority is an insufficient basis for government, that France was made by the Capets, that she ought never to have broken with them entirely, that she would even now do well to restore them, the younger branch

of them, if the elder is impracticable, that with the monarchy she ought to form again aristocratic institutions, a second chamber, and, to some extent, a hereditary nobility—this is the main thesis of the new part of M. Renan's volume. If this is not done, France, he thinks, cannot hope to vie with Prussia, which owes its victory to its aristocratic organisation and to the virtues of endurance and discipline which this organisation fosters. France's only hope of revenge must then be in the International. The superficial jacobinism, the vulgar republicanism, the materialism (for by all these names and more does M. Renan call it), which the French Revolution introduced, and which has brought France to her present ruin, has fatal attractions for the crowd everywhere; it has eaten far into the heart and life of England; it has overrun all the Continent except Prussia and Russia.

Prussia too is very probably doomed to enter into this "way of all flesh," to be forced into "the whirl of the witches' sabbath of democracy;" and then Prussia's day, too, is over, and France is revenged. At the same time M. Renan suggests certain reforms in French education. These reforms may at any rate, he thinks, go forward, whatever else the future may have in store for us: whether a Capet at Rheims or the International at Potsdam.

All this makes the new part of M. Renan's volume. He has reprinted here besides, his two letters to Dr. Strauss and several other publications occasioned by the late war; while the volume ends with an essay on Constitutional Monarchy in France, and another on the respective share of the family and the State in the work of education, which appeared before the war began. These two essays may rank with the best things

M. Renan has written, and to read them again heightens our admiration of them. The new part of the book abounds with ingenious and striking thoughts, eloquently expressed; yet this part will not entirely satisfy the friends of M. Renan, nor does it quite answer, to say the truth, to the impression left on us by the summary of its contents which we read in the *Times* before the book appeared. It has not the usual consummate roundness of M. Renan's composition, the appearance of having been long and thoroughly prepared in the mind, and of now coming forth in perfect ripeness; there are, or we seem to see, marks here and there of haste, excitement, and chagrin. This was perhaps inevitable.

Our business is not with politics, foreign or domestic; yet on one or two of the political points where M. Renan does not quite satisfy us, we must touch. We will not ask whether France in gen-

eral has not let the idea of dynastic attachment, as M. Renan calls it, and the remembrance of its historic self before 1789, so completely die out that it is vain to seek now to restore them, although, when Burke wrote, this might still have been possible. But we will observe that this restoration has, in any case, an enemy more serious and more respectable than that vulgar jacobinism, with no higher aim than to content the envy and the materialistic cravings of the masses, which M. Renan assails with such scorn; it has against it the republicanism of men, for instance, like M. Quinet. This republicanism is a reasoned and serious faith, and it grows not out of a stupid insensibility to the historic life and institutions of a nation, nor out of a failure to perceive that in the world's progress, as M. Renan eloquently and profoundly urges, all cannot shine, all cannot be prosperous, some

sacrificed lives there must be; but it grows out of the conviction that in what we call our civilisation this sacrifice is excessive. Our civilisation in the old and famous countries of Europe has truly been, as M. Renan says, in its origin an aristocratic work, the work of a few: its maintenance is the work of a few; "country, honour, duty, are things created and upheld by a small number of men amidst a multitude which, left to itself, lets them fall." Yes, because this multitude are in vice and misery outside them; and surely that they are so is in itself some condemnation of the "aristocratic work." We do not say that the historic life and continuity of a nation are therefore to be violently broken, or its traditional institutions abandoned; but we say that a case has been made out against our mere actual civilization, and a new work given it to do, which were not so visible when Burke

wrote, which would certainly have fixed the regards of Burke now, and which M. Renan too much leaves out of sight.

A mere looker-on may smile to read at p. 153, written before Alsace and Lorraine were ceded and when there was still hope of saving them, that France could not survive their loss, that she is like a building so compact that to pull out one or two large stones makes it tumble down, or like a living being with an organisation so highly centralised that to have an important limb cut off is death; and then to read at p. 58 and other passages, written since peace was made, that the immense resources of France are hardly at all altered or impaired, that she is *à peine entamée.* But of this kind of inconsistency a man of heart and imagination may well be guilty when his country is in question; Burke, assuredly, might have been guilty of it.

Our one serious point of difference with M. Renan, and where we confess he somewhat disappoints us, is in his discussion of the faults of France. The capital fault, the cherished defect of France, is—what does the reader think?—want of faith in science, *le manque de foi à la science.* In the same strain speaks Mdme. Sand in the charming *Letters* she has lately published: *Nous voulons penser et agir à la fois,* she says; and therefore we are beaten. Nay, our amiability itself puts us at a disadvantage, she adds, in this bad actual world: *Nous ne sommes pas capables de nous préparer à la guerre pendant vingt ans; nous sommes si incapables de haïr!* It is the head, *la tête,* which is so greatly in fault; the heart, the sentiments are right; *le Français,* says M. Renan, *est bon, étourdi;* yes, *étourdi* he may be, harum-scarum; but

he is *bon.* Burke, whom we have so much quoted, says of Charles II.:

"The person given to us by Monk was a man without any sense of his duty as a prince, without any regard to the dignity of his crown, without any love to his people; dissolute, false, venal, and destitute of any positive good quality whatsoever, except a pleasant temper and the manners of a gentleman."

So far he, too, was *bon:* but his goodness had gaps which, though certainly he was also without the scientific temper, would make us hesitate to say that his chief fault was want of faith in science. Of France we may say the same. It seems to us much more true of England than of France that the national defect is want of faith in science. In France the great defect lies, surely, in a much simpler thing—want of faith in *conduct.* M. Renan's chief concern at the failure of the Reformation in France is for what *the head* lost; for the better schools, the

reading, the instruction, which the Reformation would have brought with it. But M. Michelet put his finger on the real cause for concern, when he said that the Reformation failed in France because a *moral* reformation France would not have. That sense of personal responsibility which is the foundation of all true religion, which possessed Luther, which possessed also the great saints of Catholicism, but which Luther alone managed to convey to the popular mind, earning thereby—little as we owe him for the theological doctrines he imagined to be his great boon to us—a most true title to our regard; *that* was what the Huguenots had, what the mass of the French nation had not and did not care to have, and what they suffer to this day for not having. One of the gifts and graces which M. Renan finds in France is her enmity to pedantry and over-strictness in these matters: and in

his letter to Dr. Strauss he says that, although he himself has been sufficiently near holy orders to think himself bound to a regular life, he should be sorry not to see around him a brilliant and dissipated society. No one feels more than we do the harm which the exaggeration of Hebraism has done in England; but this is Hellenism with a vengeance! Considering what the natural propensions of men are, such language appears to us out of place anywhere, and in France simply fatal. Moral conscience, self-control, seriousness, steadfastness, are not the whole of human life certainly, but they are by far the greatest part of it; without them—and this is the very burden of the Hebrew prophets and a fact of experience as old as the world—nations cannot stand. France does not enough see their importance; and the worst of it is that no man can make another see their importance un-

less he sees it naturally. For these things, just as for the more brilliant things of art and science, there is a bent, a turn. "He showed his ways unto Moses, his works unto the children of Israel,"—to them, and to the heavy Germanic nations whom they have moulded; not, apparently, to the children of Gomer and to Vercingetorix. But this opens a troubled prospect for the children of Gomer.

But perhaps we English, too, shall be as the children of Gomer; for M. Renan has a theory that according to "that great law by which the primitive race of an invaded country always ends by getting the upper hand, England is becoming every day more Celtic and less Germanic;" in the public opinion and policy of England for the last thirty years he sees the *esprit celtique, plus doux, plus sympathetique, plus humain.* We imagine our Irish neighbours by no

means share his opinion. A more truly Germanic, or, at least, Anglo-Saxon, performance than the abolition of the Irish Church through the power of the Dissenters' antipathy to church-establishments, then telling ourselves in our newspapers we had done it out of a pure love of reason and justice, and then calling solemnly upon the quick-witted Irish, who knew that the Dissenters would have let the Irish Church stand for ever sooner than give a shilling of its funds to the Catholics entitled to them, to believe our claptrap and be properly grateful to us at last, was never witnessed. What we call our Philistinism, to which M. Renan might perhaps apply his favourite epithets of *dur et rogue,* may well bring us into trouble; but hardly, we think, our *doux esprit celtique.*

It seems, indeed, as if, in all that relates to character and conduct strictly

so called, M. Renan, whom at other times we follow with so much sympathy, saw things with other eyes than ours. In a parallel between the English Revolution of 1688 and the French Revolution of 1830, he asks himself why the first succeeded and the second failed; and he answers that it cannot have been owing to the difference between William of Orange and Louis-Philippe, because the second had no faults as a ruler which the first did not show in fully as great a degree. When we read this, we are fairly lost in amazement. Surely the most important point in a ruler is *character;* and William III., whatever were his faults, had a character great and commanding; while Louis-Philippe had, or gave the world the impression of having, a character somewhat (to speak quite frankly) ignoble.

We would fain stop here in our enumeration of matters of difference; for

to differ with M. Renan is far less natural to us than to agree with him. But it is impossible not to notice one or two assumptions respecting the French Revolution and the intellectual value of France to the world, because to these assumptions M. Renan, like almost all Frenchmen, seems to challenge the assent of mankind, at least of all mankind except France's *rogue et jaloux* enemy, Prussia. Greece and Judea, he says, have had to pay with the loss of their national existence the honor of having given lessons to all mankind; in like manner—

"France at this moment expiates her Revolution; she will perhaps one day reap its fruits in the grateful memory of emancipated nations."

Just in the same strain writes Mdme. Sand, in the *Letters* we have already quoted:

"Even though Germany should appear to conquer us, we shall remain the *peuple initi-*

ateur, which receives a lesson and does not take one."

In prosperity the French are incorrigible, so that a time like the present offers the only opportunity for disabusing them of notions of this kind, so obstructive to improvement; and M. Renan, one would have hoped, was the very man to do it. Greece has given us art and science, Judea has given us the Bible; these are positive achievements. Whoever gives us a just and rational constitution of human society will also confer a great boon on us and effect a great work; but what has the French Revolution accomplished towards this? Nothing. It was an insurrection against the old routine, it furiously destroyed the medieval form of society; this it did, and this was well if anything had come of it; but into what that is new and fruitful has France proceeded to initiate us? A colourless,

humdrum, and ill-poised life is a baneful thing, and men would fain change it; but our benefactor and initiator is the poet who brings us a new one, not the drunkard who gets rid of it by breaking the windows and bringing the house about his ears.

There seems to us a like exaggeration in the French estimate of their country's intellectual rank in the world. France is the *plat de sel,* the dish containing the salt without which all the other dishes of the world would be savourless; she is (we will use M. Renan's own words, for a translation might easily do injustice to them)—

"la grande maîtresse de l'investigation savante, l'ingénieuse, vive et prompte initiatrice du monde à toute fine et délicate pensée;"

she alone has—

"une société exquise, charmante et sérieuse à la fois, fine, tolérante, aimable, *sachant tout sans avoir rien appris, devinant d'instinct le dernier résultat de toute philosophie.*"

We wonder if it ever occurs to these masters *du goût et du tact* that in an Englishman, an Italian, a German, this language provokes a smile. No one feels more than we do, and few Englishmen feel enough, the good of that amiability, even if it does not go very deep, of that sympathetic side in the French nature, which makes German and Protestant Alsace cling to defeated France, while, mainly for the want of it, prosperous England cannot attach Ireland. No one feels more than we do, few Englishmen feel enough, the good of that desire for lucidity, even apparent, in thought and expression, which has made the French language. But, after all, a nation's intellectual place depends upon its having reached the very highest rank in the very highest lines of spiritual endeavour; this is what in the end makes its ideal; this is what fixes its scale of intellectual judgment, and what

it counts by in the world. More than twenty years ago we said, lovers of France as we are, and abundant and brilliant as is her work of a lower order than the very highest:

> "France, famed in all great arts, *in none supreme*"—

and this still seems to us to be the true criticism on her. M. Renan opposes living names, for or against which we will say nothing, to the best living names of Germany; but what is one generation? and what, directly we leave our own generation, are any names but the greatest? And where, throughout all her generations, has France a name like Goethe? where, still more, has she names like Sophocles and Plato, Dante and Raphael, Shakespeare and Newton? That is the real question for her, when she is esteeming herself the salt of the earth. Probably the incapacity for seri-

ousness in the highest sense, for what the Greeks called τὸ σπουδαῖον, and Virgil calls *virtus verusque labor,* is here too what keeps France back from perfection. For the Greeks and Romans, and a truly Latin race like the Italians, have this seriousness intellectually, as the Hebrews and the Germanic races have it morally; and it may be remarked in passing that this distinction makes the conditions of the future for Latin Italy quite different from those for Celtic France. Only seriousness is constructive; Latin Gaul was a Roman construction, Old France was, as M. Renan himself says, a Germanic construction; France has been since 1789 getting rid of all the plan, cramps, and stays of her original builders, and their edifice is in ruins; but is the Celt, by himself, constructive enough to rebuild?

We sincerely believe that France would do well, instead of proclaiming

herself the salt of the earth, to ponder these things; and sometimes it is hard to refrain from saying so. M. Renan has tempted us; yet we see with regret our space nearly gone. Why could we not have kept to our own generation? and then we might have given ourselves the pleasure of saying how high is M. Renan's place in it. Certainly, we find something of a bathos in his challenge to Germany to produce a living poet to surpass M. Hugo; but in sober seriousness we might challenge Germany, or any other country, to produce a living critic to surpass M. Renan. We have just been reading an American essayist, Mr. Higginson, who says that the United States are to evolve a type of literary talent superior to anything yet seen in the mother country; and this perhaps, when it is ready, will be something to surprise us. But taking things as they now are, where shall we find a living

writer who so habitually as M. Renan, moves among questions of the deepest interest, presents them so attractively, discusses them with so much feeling, insight, and felicity? Even as to the all-importance of *conduct,* which in his irritation against the "chaste Vandals" who have been overrunning France we have seen him a little disposed just now to underrate, he is far too wise a man not to be perfectly sound at bottom. *Le monde,* we find him saying in 1869, *ne tient debout que par un peu de vertu.* The faults and dangers both of vulgar democracy and of vulgar liberalism there is no one who has seen more clearly or described so well. The vulgar democrat's "happiness of the greatest number" he analyses into what it practically is—a principle *réduisant tout à contenter les volontés matérialistes des foules,* of that "popular mass, growing every day larger, which is destitute of

any sort of religious ideal and can recognise no social principle beyond and above the desire of satisfying these materialistic cravings." The *esprit démocratique* of this sort of democracy, *avec sa violence, son ton absolu, sa simplicité décevante d'idées, ses soupçons méticuleux, son ingratitude,* is admirably touched; but touched not less admirably is another very different social type, the cherished ideal of vulgar liberalism, the American type—

"fondé essentiellement sur la liberté et la propriété sans priviléges de classes, sans institutions anciennes, sans histoire, sans société aristocratique, sans cour, sans pouvoir brillant, sans universités sérieuses ni fortes institutions scientifiques. Ces sociétés manquent de distinction, de noblesse; elles ne font guère d'œuvres originales en fait d'art et de science"—

but they can come to be very strong and to produce very good things, and that is enough for our Philistines.

What can be better, and in the end more fruitful, than criticism of this force; but what constituency can accept a man guilty of making it? Let M. Renan continue to make it, and let him not fear but that in making it, in bringing thought into the world to oust claptrap, he fulfils a higher duty than by sketching paper constitutions, or by prosecuting electoral campaigns in the Seine-et-Marne. "*The fashion of this world passeth away,*" wrote Goethe from Rome in 1787, "and I would fain occupy myself only with the eternal."

JOHNSON'S LIVES

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DA mihi, Domine, scire quod sciendum est—"Grant that the knowledge I get may be the knowledge which is worth having!"—the spirit of that prayer ought to rule our education. How little it does rule it, every discerning man will acknowledge. Life is short, and our faculties of attention and of recollection are limited; in education we proceed as if our life were endless, and our powers of attention and recollection inexhaustible. We have not time or strength to deal with half of the matters which are thrown upon our minds, and they prove a useless load to us. When some one talked to Themistocles of an art of memory, he answered: "Teach me rather to forget!" The sar-

casm well criticises the fatal want of proportion between what we put into our minds and their real needs and powers.

From the time when first I was led to think about education, this want of proportion is what has most struck me. It is the great obstacle to progress, yet it is by no means remarked and contended against as it should be. It hardly begins to present itself until we pass beyond the strict elements of education—beyond the acquisition, I mean, of reading, of writing, and of calculating so far as the operations of common life require. But the moment we pass beyond these, it begins to appear. Languages, grammar, literature, history, geography, mathematics, the knowledge of nature—what of these is to be taught, how much, and how? There is no clear, well-grounded consent. The same with religion. Religion is surely to be taught,

but what of it is to be taught, and how? A clear, well-grounded consent is again wanting. And taught in such fashion as things are now, how often must a candid and sensible man, if he could be offered an art of memory to secure all that he has learned of them, as to a very great deal of it be inclined to say with Themistocles: "Teach me rather to forget!"

In England the common notion seems to be that education is advanced in two ways principally: by for ever adding fresh matters of instruction, and by preventing uniformity. I should be inclined to prescribe just the opposite course; to prescribe a severe limitation of the number of matters taught, a severe uniformity in the line of study followed. Wide ranging, and the multiplication of matters to be investigated, belong to private study, to the development of special aptitudes in the individ-

ual learner, and to the demands which they raise in him. But separate from all this should be kept the broad plain lines of study for almost universal use. I say *almost* universal, because they must of necessity vary a little with the varying conditions of men. Whatever the pupil finds set out for him upon these lines, he should learn; therefore it ought not to be too much in quantity. The essential thing is that it should be well chosen. If once we can get it well chosen, the more uniformly it can be kept to, the better. The teacher will be more at home; and besides, when we have got what is good and suitable, there is small hope of gain, and great certainty of risk, in departing from it.

No such lines are laid out, and perhaps no one could be trusted to lay them out authoritatively. But to amuse oneself with laying them out in fancy is a good exercise for one's thoughts. One

may lay them out for this or that description of pupil, in this or that branch of study. The wider the interest of the branch of study taken, and the more extensive the class of pupils concerned, the better for our purpose. Suppose we take the department of letters. It is interesting to lay out in one's mind the ideal line of study to be followed by all who have to learn Latin and Greek. But it is still more interesting to lay out the ideal line of study to be followed by all who are concerned with that body of literature which exists in English, because this class is so much more numerous amongst us. The thing would be, one imagines, to begin with a very brief introductory sketch of our subject; then to fix a certain series of works to serve as what the French, taking an expression from the builder's business, call *points de repère*—points which stand as so many natural centres, and

by returning to which we can always find our way again, if we are embarrassed; finally, to mark out a number of illustrative and representative works, connecting themselves with each of these *points de repère*. In the introductory sketch we are amongst generalities, in the group of illustrative works we are amongst details; generalities and details have, both of them, their perils for the learner. It is evident that, for purposes of education, the most important parts by far in our scheme are what we call the *points de repère*. To get these rightly chosen and thoroughly known is the great matter. For my part, in thinking of this or that line of study which human minds follow, I feel always prompted to seek, first and foremost, the leading *points de repère* in it.

In editing for the use of the young the group of chapters which are now commonly distinguished as those of the

Babylonian Isaiah, I drew attention to their remarkable fitness for serving as a point of this kind to the student of universal history. But a work which by many is regarded as simply and solely a document of religion, there is difficulty, perhaps, in employing for historical and literary purposes. With works of a secular character one is on safer ground. And for years past, whenever I have had occasion to use Johnson's *Lives of the Poets,* the thought has struck me how admirable a *point de repère,* or fixed centre of the sort described above, these lives might be made to furnish for the student of English literature. If we could but take, I have said to myself, the most important of the lives in Johnson's volumes, and leave out all the rest, what a text-book we should have! The volumes at present are a work to stand in a library, "a work which no gentleman's library should be without." But we

want to get from them a text-book, to be in the hands of every one who desires even so much as a general acquaintance with English literature;—and so much acquaintance as this who does not desire? The work as Johnson published it is not fitted to serve as such a text-book; it is too extensive, and contains the lives of many poets quite insignificant. Johnson supplied lives of all whom the booksellers proposed to include in their collection of British Poets; he did not choose the poets himself, although he added two or three to those chosen by the booksellers. Whatever Johnson did in the department of literary biography and criticism possesses interest and deserves our attention. But in his *Lives of the Poets* there are six of pre-eminent interest; the lives of six men who, while the rest in the collection are of inferior rank, stand out as names of the first class in

English literature—Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope, Gray. These six writers differ among themselves, of course, in power and importance, and every one can see, that, if we were following certain modes of literary classification, Milton would have to be placed on a solitary eminence far above any of them. But if, without seeking a close view of individual differences, we form a large and liberal first class among English writers, all these six personages —Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope, Gray—must, I think, be placed in it. Their lives cover a space of more than a century and a half, from 1608, the year of Milton's birth, down to 1771, the date of the death of Gray. Through this space of more than a century and a half the six lives conduct us. We follow the course of what Warburton well calls "the most agreeable subject in the world, which is literary history,"

and follow it in the lives of men of letters of the first class. And the writer of their lives is himself, too, a man of letters of the first class. Malone calls Johnson "the brightest ornament of the eighteenth century." He is justly to be called, at any rate, a man of letters of the first class, and the greatest power in English letters during the eighteenth century. And in these characteristic lives, not finished until 1781, and "which I wrote," as he himself tells us, "in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work and working with vigour and haste," we have Johnson mellowed by years, Johnson in his ripeness and plenitude, treating the subject which he loved best and knew best. Much of it he could treat with the knowledge and sure tact of a contemporary; even from Milton and Dryden he was scarcely further separated than our generation is from Burns

and Scott. Having all these recommendations, his *Lives of the Poets* do indeed truly stand for what Boswell calls them, "the work which of all Dr. Johnson's writings will perhaps be read most generally and with most pleasure." And in the lives of the six chief personages of the work, the lives of Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope, and Gray, we have its very kernel and quintessence; we have the work relieved of whatever is less significant, retaining nothing which is not highly significant, brought within easy and convenient compass, and admirably fitted to serve as a *point de repère,* a fixed and thoroughly known centre of departure and return, to the student of English literature.

I know of no such first-rate piece of literature, for supplying in this way the wants of the literary student, existing at all in any other language; or exist-

ing in our own language, for any period except the period which Johnson's six lives cover. A student cannot read them without gaining from them, consciously or unconsciously, an insight into the history of English literature and life. He would find great benefit, let me add, from reading in connection with each biography something of the author with whom it deals; the first two books, say, of *Paradise Lost,* in connection with the life of Milton; *Absalom and Achitophel,* and the *Dedication to the Æneis,* in connection with the life of Dryden; in connection with Swift's life, the *Battle of the Books;* with Addison's, the *Coverley Papers;* with Pope's, the imitations of the *Satires* and *Epistles* of Horace. The *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* everybody knows, and will have it present to his mind when he reads the life of Gray. But of the other works which I have mentioned how little can this be

said; to how many of us are Pope and Addison and Dryden and Swift, and even Milton himself, mere names, about whose date and history and supposed characteristics of style we may have learnt by rote something from a handbook, but of the real men and of the power of their works we know nothing! From Johnson's biographies the student will get a sense of what the real men were, and with this sense fresh in his mind he will find the occasion propitious for acquiring also, in the way pointed out, a sense of the power of their works.

This will seem to most people a very unambitious discipline. But the fault of most of the disciplines proposed in education is that they are by far too ambitious. Our improvers of education are almost always for proceeding by way of augmentation and complication; reduction and simplification, I

say, is what is rather required. We give the learner too much to do, and we are over-zealous to tell him what he ought to think. Johnson himself has admirably marked the real line of our education through letters. He says in his life of Pope:—"Judgment is forced upon us by experience. He that reads many books must compare one opinion or one style with another; and when he compares, must necessarily distinguish, reject, and prefer." The end and aim of education through letters is to get this experience. Our being told by another what its results will properly be found to be, is not, even if we are told aright, at all the same thing as getting the experience for ourselves. The discipline, therefore, which puts us in the way of getting it, cannot be called an inconsiderable or inefficacious one. We should take care not to imperil its acquisition by refusing to trust to it in its simplic-

ity, by being eager to add, set right, and annotate. It is much to secure the reading, by young English people, of the lives of the six chief poets of our nation between the years 1650 and 1750, related by our foremost man of letters of the eighteenth century. It is much to secure their reading, under the stimulus of Johnson's interesting recital and forcible judgments, famous specimens of the authors whose lives are before them. Do not let us insist on also reviewing in detail and supplementing Johnson's work for them, on telling them what they ought really and definitively to think about the six authors and about the exact place of each in English literature. Perhaps our pupils are not ripe for it; perhaps, too, we have not Johnson's interest and Johnson's force; we are not the power in letters for our century which he was for his. We may be pedantic, obscure, dull, everything

that bores, rather than everything that attracts; and so Johnson and his lives will repel, and will not be received, because we insist on being received along with them. Again, as we bar a learner's approach to Homer and Virgil by our *chevaux de frise* of elaborate grammar, so we are apt to stop his way to a piece of English literature by imbedding it in a mass of notes and additional matter. Mr. Croker's edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is a good example of the labour and ingenuity which may be spent upon a masterpiece, with the result, after all, really of rather encumbering than illustrating it. All knowledge may be in itself good, but this kind of editing seems to proceed upon the notion that we have only one book to read in the course of our life, or else that we have eternity to read in. What can it matter to our generation whether it was Molly Aston or Miss

Boothby whose preference for Lord Lyttelton made Johnson jealous, and produced in his *Life of Lyttelton* a certain tone of disparagement? With the young reader, at all events, our great endeavour should be to bring him face to face with masterpieces, and to hold him there, not distracting or rebutting him with needless excursions or trifling details.

I should like, therefore, to reprint Johnson's six chief lives, simply as they are given in the edition of four volumes octavo,—the edition which passes for being the first to have a correct and complete text,—and to leave the lives, in that natural form, to have their effect upon the reader. I should like to think that a number of young people might thus be brought to know an important period of our literary and intellectual history, by means of the lives of six of its leading and representative

authors, told by a great man. I should like to think that they would go on, under the stimulus of the lives, to acquaint themselves with some leading and representative work of each author. In the six lives they would at least have secured, I think, a most valuable *point de repère* in the history of our English life and literature, a point from which afterwards to find their way; whether they might desire to ascend upwards to our anterior literature, or to come downwards to the literature of yesterday and of the present.

The six lives cover a period of literary and intellectual movement in which we are all profoundly interested. It is the passage of our nation to prose and reason; the passage to a type of thought and expression, modern, European, and which on the whole is ours at the present day, from a type antiquated, peculiar, and which is ours no longer.

The period begins with a prose like this of Milton: "They who to states and governors of the commonwealth direct their speech, high court of parliament! or wanting such access in a private condition, write that which they foresee may advance the public good; I suppose them, if at the beginning of no mean endeavour, not a little altered and moved inwardly in their minds." It ends with a prose like this of Smollett: "My spirit began to accommodate itself to my beggarly fate, and I became so mean as to go down towards Wapping, with an intention to inquire for an old schoolfellow, who, I understood, had got the command of a small coasting vessel then in the river, and implore his assistance." These are extreme instances; but they give us no unfaithful notion of the change in our prose between the reigns of Charles I. and of George III. Johnson has re-

corded his own impression of the extent of the change and of its salutariness. Boswell gave him a book to read, written in 1702 by the English chaplain of a regiment stationed in Scotland. "It is sad stuff, sir," said Johnson, after reading it; "miserably written, as books in general then were. There is now an elegance of style universally diffused. No man now writes so ill as Martin's *Account of the Hebrides* is written. A man could not write so ill if he should try. Set a merchant's clerk now to write, and he'll do better."

It seems as if a simple and natural prose were a thing which we might expect to come easy to communities of men, and to come early to them; but we know from experience that it is not so. Poetry and the poetic form of expression naturally precede prose. We see this in ancient Greece. We see prose forming itself there gradually and with

labour; we see it passing through more than one stage before it attains to thorough propriety and lucidity, long after forms of consummate adequacy have already been reached and used in poetry. It is a people's growth in practical life, and its native turn for developing this life and for making progress in it, which awakens the desire for a good prose—a prose plain, direct, intelligible, serviceable. A dead language, the Latin, for a long time furnished the nations of Europe with an instrument of the kind, superior to any which they had yet discovered in their own. But nations such as England and France, called to a great historic life, and with powerful interests and gifts either social or practical, were sure to feel the need of having a sound prose of their own, and to bring such a prose forth. They brought it forth in the seventeenth century; France first, afterwards England.

The Restoration marks the real moment of birth of our modern English prose. Men of lucid and direct mental habit there were, such as Chillingworth, in whom before the Restoration the desire and the commencements of a modern prose show themselves. There were men like Barrow, weighty and powerful, whose mental habit the old prose suited, who continued its forms and locutions after the Restoration. But the hour was come for the new prose, and it grew and prevailed. In Johnson's time its victory had long been assured, and the old style seemed barbarous. The prose writers of the eighteenth century have indeed their mannerisms and phrases which are no longer ours. Johnson says of Milton's blame of the universities for allowing young men designed for Orders in the Church to act in plays, "This is sufficiently peevish in a man, who, when he mentions his exile from college,

relates, with great luxuriance, the compensation which the pleasures of the theatre afford him. Plays were therefore only criminal when they were acted by academics." We should now-a-days not say *peevish* here, nor *luxuriance,* nor *academics*. Yet the style is ours by its organism, if not by its phrasing. It is by its organism—an organism opposed to length and involvement, and enabling us to be clear, plain, and short—that English style after the Restoration breaks with the style of the times preceding it, finds the true law of prose, and becomes modern; becomes, in spite of superficial differences, the style of our own day.

Burnet has pointed out how we are under obligations in this matter to Charles II., whom Johnson described as "the last king of England who was a man of parts." A king of England by no means fulfils his whole duty by being

a man of parts, or by loving and encouraging art, science, and literature. Yet the artist and the student of the natural sciences will always feel a kindness towards the two Charleses for their interest in art and science; and modern letters, too, have their debt to Charles II., although it may be quite true that that prince, as Burnet says, "had little or no literature." "The King had little or no literature, but true and good sense, and had got a right notion of style; for he was in France at the time when they were much set on reforming their language. It soon appeared that he had a true taste. So this helped to raise the value of these men (Tillotson and others), when the king approved of the style their discourses generally ran in, which was clear, plain, and short."

It is the victory of this prose style, "clear, plain, and short," over what Burnet calls "the old style, long and

heavy," which is the distinguishing achievement, in the history of English letters, of the century following the Restoration. From the first it proceeded rapidly and was never checked. Burnet says of the Chancellor Finch, Earl of Nottingham—"He was long much admired for his eloquence, but it was laboured and affected, and he saw it much despised before he died." A like revolution of taste brought about a general condemnation of our old prose style, imperfectly disengaged from the style of poetry. By Johnson's time the new style, the style of prose, was altogether paramount in its own proper domain, and in its pride of victorious strength had invaded also the domain of poetry.

That invasion is now visited by us with a condemnation not less strong and general than the condemnation which the eighteenth century passed upon the

unwieldy prose of its predecessors. But let us be careful to do justice while we condemn. A thing good in its own place may be bad out of it. Prose requires a different style from poetry. Poetry, no doubt, is more excellent in itself than prose. In poetry man finds the highest and most beautiful expression of that which is in him. We had far better poetry than the poetry of the eighteenth century before that century arrived, we have had better since it departed. Like the Greeks, and unlike the French, we can point to an age of poetry anterior to our age of prose, eclipsing our age of prose in glory, and fixing the future character and conditions of our literature. We do well to place our pride in the Elizabethan age and Shakespeare, as the Greeks placed theirs in Homer. We did well to return in the present century to the poetry of that older age for illumination and inspira-

tion, and to put aside, in a great measure, the poetry and prose intervening between Milton and Wordsworth. Milton, in whom our great poetic age expired, was the last of the immortals. Of the five poets whose lives follow his in our proposed volume, three, Dryden, Addison, and Swift, are eminent prose-writers as well as poets; two of the three, Swift and Addison, far more distinguished as prose-writers than as poets. The glory of English literature is in poetry, and in poetry the strength of the eighteenth century does not lie.

Nevertheless, the eighteenth century accomplished for us an immense literary progress, and even its shortcomings in poetry were an instrument to that progress, and served it. The example of Germany may show us what a nation loses from having no prose style. The practical genius of our people could not but urge irresistibly to the production

of a real prose style, because for the purposes of modern life the old English prose, the prose of Milton and Taylor, is cumbersome, unavailable, impossible. A style of regularity, uniformity, precision, balance, was wanted. These are the qualities of a serviceable prose style. Poetry has a different *logic,* as Coleridge said, from prose; poetical style follows another law of evolution than the style of prose. But there is no doubt that a style of regularity, uniformity, precision, balance, will acquire a yet stronger hold upon the mind of a nation, if it is adopted in poetry as well as in prose, and so comes to govern both. This is what happened in France. To the practical, modern, and social genius of the French, a true prose was indispensable. They produced one of conspicuous excellence, one marked in the highest degree by the qualities of regularity, uniformity, precision, bal-

ance. With little opposition from any deep-seated and imperious poetic instincts, they made their poetry conform to the law which was moulding their prose. French poetry became marked with the qualities of regularity, uniformity, precision, balance. This may have been bad for French poetry, but it was good for French prose. It heightened the perfection with which those qualities, the true qualities of prose, were impressed upon it. When England, at the Restoration, desired a modern prose, and began to create it, our writers turned naturally to French literature, which had just accomplished the very process which engaged them. The King's acuteness and taste, as we have seen, helped. Indeed, to the admission of French influence of all kinds, Charles the Second's character and that of his court were but too favourable. But the influence of the French writers

was at that moment on the whole fortunate, and seconded what was a vital and necessary effort in our literature. Our literature required a prose which conformed to the true law of prose; and that it might acquire this the more surely, it compelled poetry, as in France, to conform itself to the law of prose likewise. The classic verse of French poetry was the Alexandrine, a measure favourable to the qualities of regularity, uniformity, precision, balance. Gradually a measure favourable to those very same qualities —the ten-syllable couplet—established itself as the classic verse of England, until in the eighteenth century it had become the ruling form of our poetry. Poetry, or rather the use of verse, entered in a remarkable degree, during that century, into the whole of the daily life of the civilised classes; and the poetry of the century was a perpetual school of the qualities requi-

site for a good prose, the qualities of regularity, uniformity, precision, balance. This may have been of no great service to English poetry, although to say that it has been of no service at all, to say that the eighteenth century has in no respect changed the conditions of English poetical style, or that it has changed them for the worse, would be untrue. But it was undeniably of signal service to that which was the great want and work of the hour, English prose.

Do not let us, therefore, hastily despise Johnson and his century for their defective poetry and criticism of poetry. True, Johnson is capable of saying: "Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleasure had he not known the author!" True, he is capable of maintaining "that the description of the temple in Congreve's *Mourning Bride* was the finest poetical

passage he had ever read—he recollected none in Shakespeare equal to it." But we are to conceive of Johnson and of this century as having a special task committed to them, the establishment of English prose; and as capable of being warped and narrowed in their judgments of poetry by this exclusive task. Such is the common course and law of progress; one thing is done at a time, and other things are sacrificed to it. We must be thankful for the thing done, if it is valuable, and we must put up with the temporary sacrifice of other things to this one. The other things will have their turn sooner or later. Above all, a nation with profound poetical instincts, like the English nation, may be trusted to work itself right again in poetry after periods of mistaken poetical practice. Even in the midst of an age of such practice, and with his style frequently showing the bad influence of

it, Gray was saved, we may say, and remains a poet whose work has high and pure worth, simply by knowing the Greeks thoroughly, more thoroughly than any English poet had known them since Milton. Milton was a survivor from the great age of poetry; Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Swift were mighty workers for the age of prose. Gray, a poet in the midst of the age of prose, a poet, moreover, of by no means the highest force and of scanty productiveness, nevertheless claims a place among the six chief personages of Johnson's lives, because it was impossible for an English poet, even in that age, who knew the great Greek masters intimately, not to respond to their good influence, and to be rescued from the false poetical practice of his contemporaries. Of such avail to a nation are deep poetical instincts even in an age of prose. How much more may they be trusted to assert themselves

after the age of prose has ended, and to remedy any poetical mischief done by it! And meanwhile the work of the hour, the necessary and appointed work, has been done, and we have got our prose.

Let us always bear in mind, therefore, that the century so well represented by Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Swift, and of which the literary history is so powerfully written by Johnson in his lives, is a century of prose—a century of which the great work in literature was the formation of English prose. Johnson was himself a labourer in this great and needful work, and was ruled by its influences. His blame of genuine poets like Milton and Gray, his over-praise of artificial poets like Pope, are to be taken as the utterances of a man who worked for an age of prose, who was ruled by its influences, and could not but be ruled by them. Of poetry he speaks as a man whose sense

for that with which he is dealing is in some degree imperfect.

Yet even on poetry Johnson's utterances are valuable, because they are the utterances of a great and original man. That indeed he was; and to be conducted by such a man through an important century cannot but do us good, even though our guide may in some places be less competent than in others. Johnson was the man of an age of prose. Furthermore, he was a strong force of conservation and concentration, in an epoch which by its natural tendencies seemed moving towards expansion and freedom. But he was a great man, and great men are always instructive. The more we study him, the higher will be our esteem for the power of his mind, the width of his interests, the largeness of his knowledge, the freshness, fearlessness, and strength of his judgments. The higher, too, will be our esteem for

his character. His well-known lines on Levett's death, beautiful and touching lines, are still more beautiful and touching because they recall a whole history of Johnson's goodness, tenderness, and charity. Human dignity, on the other hand, he maintained, we all know how well, through the whole long and arduous struggle of his life, from his servitor days at Oxford, down to the *Jam moriturus* of his closing hour. His faults and strangenesses are on the surface, and catch every eye. But on the whole we have in him a good and admirable type, worthy to be kept in our view for ever, of "the ancient and inbred integrity, piety, good-nature and good-humour of the English people."

A volume giving us Johnson's Lives of Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope, Gray, would give us, therefore, the compendious story of a whole important age in English Literature, told by

a great man, and in a performance which is itself a piece of English literature of the first class. If such a volume could but be prefaced by Lord Macaulay's *Life of Johnson,* it would be perfect.

A "FRIEND OF GOD"

A "FRIEND OF GOD"

THERE has lately been published[1] a pretty little volume entitled *The Following of Christ, by John Tauler; done into English by J. R. Morell.* It is not certain that the work is by Tauler; the weight of authority and of probability is, it seems to me, against his being its author. The book has many repetitions, and a manner formal and sometimes tiresome of conducting its argument. Mr. Morell's translation is written in an English occasionally slovenly and even inaccurate. Still, this little volume—which is cheap, let me say, as well as pretty—should certainly not be suffered to pass unnoticed. If it does not proceed from Tauler himself, it pro-

[1] By Burns & Oates, London and New York.

ceeds from one of that remarkable group of German mystics—"Friends of God," as they called themselves—amongst whom the great Dominican preacher of Strasburg lived and worked. And the contents of the little book, notwithstanding its forms and repetitions, are full of value. Therefore we may well say in this case with the *Imitation,*—which itself, also, issued from the deep religious movement felt in the Germanic lands along the Rhine in the fourteenth century:—"Ask not who wrote it, but attend to what it says." Mr. Morell's translation, finally, in spite of its occasional inaccuracy and slovenliness, is on the whole a sound and good one, with the signal merit of faithfully reproducing the plain and earnest tone characteristic of the original.

Every one is familiar with the *Imitation,* attributed to Thomas à Kempis. Tauler however, and his immediate

group, are to most of us names and nothing more. *Tauler's History and Life and Twenty-Five of his Sermons,* translated by Miss Winkworth, were published in 1857, with a preface by Charles Kingsley. The book is out of print and can hardly be obtained. Some of the sermons are interesting, but in general the book, even if obtained, will disappoint, I think, those who have been attracted to it by Tauler's reputation, and to reprint it as it stands would be unadvisable. Much more interesting is the *Theologia Germanica,* also translated by Miss Winkworth, a work not by Tauler himself, but by one of his group who shared his spirit. On this short book Luther set the very highest value, and justly. But this book likewise is out of print, and scarcely obtainable.

Its merit is of like kind with that of the book translated by Mr. Morell to which I now wish to call attention.

Each of the two is an answer of the sincere and deeply religious German nature to the need felt, by itself and by others, in a time such as was the middle of the fourteenth century, a time "of famine" (to use the words of the prophet Amos) "of hearing of the words of the Eternal." We read in the *Following of Christ:* "It is often said, He who suffereth a man to die of bodily hunger when he might have helped the sufferer, would be guilty of the death of that man. Much more is a man guilty towards souls when he letteth them die of hunger. For just as the soul is much nobler than the body, so much more are you guilty if you allow the soul to suffer hunger." To this hunger and suffering of the soul the *Following of Christ* is a response, but a response with a special character of its own. The *Imitation* is also a response to the same hunger, but a response of a different

character. "No way to life and peace but the way of the cross!" that, in sum, is the response of the *Imitation.* Tauler and his group would have sincerely professed that they likewise adopted it; and yet the real and characteristic response of the "Friends of God" and of such works as the *Following of Christ* and the *Theologia Germanica* is far rather this, which I quote from the first-named work: "Sin killeth nature, but nature is abhorrent of death; therefore sin is against nature, therefore sinners can never have a joy." That is the negative side of the response, and its positive side is this: "They who have left sins and come to grace have more delight and joy in one day than all sinners have ever gained."

It is the natural truth of religion and of Christianity which occupies these "Friends of God." The truly natural thing is virtue, Christian virtue; and

that it is so is proved by the peace and happiness ensuing from it. "It is much more according to nature to work virtue than vice; for virtue places nature firmly and supports it, while vice displaces it. A thoroughly natural man is a pure man. That which maketh nature impure is a faulty accident of nature and is not the essence of nature. But in order to be "a thoroughly natural man," one who "enters into himself, listens to the eternal words, and has the life full of ecstasy and joy," a man must "set aside all things and follow Christ. Christ is the everlasting aim of all men."

I have mentioned Luther as a lover of the *Theologia Germanica*. Luther too, some hundred and fifty years after our mystics, had to provide for "a famine of the words of the Eternal." Vinet has said with perfect truth that "the reformers did not separate morals

from dogma; Calvin, the most dogmatic of them all, is the one who most efficaciously and most constantly preached morals." Undoubtedly the reformers preached morals; undoubtedly, too, Calvin and Luther produced an immeasurably greater effect than Tauler and his group. But how was the effect obtained? After laying down the *Following of Christ,* I took up Luther's famous *Commentary on Galatians.* The Commentary deserves its reputation; it has clearness, force, unction. But on what thought does Luther rest with all his weight, as Tauler rests with all his weight on the thought: "Sin is against nature; they who have left sins have more delight and joy in one day than all sinners have ever gained"? Luther rests with his whole weight on the article of justification, that Gospel doctrine, which, he says, is *suavissima et consolationis plenissima.* "All heretics

have continually failed in this one point, that they do not rightly understand or know the article of justification; do not see that by none other sacrifice or offering could God's fierce anger be appeased, but by the precious blood of the son of God."

The article of justification has been made arid and obnoxious by formalists; let us take it from the mouth of this man of genius, its earnestly convinced and unrivalled expositor. *Christ has been made a curse for us!*—that is the point; Christ has assumed, in our stead, the guilt and curse of sin from which we could not otherwise be delivered, but are delivered by believing in his having so done. "When the merciful Father saw us to be so crushed under the curse of the law, and so bound by it, that we could never through our own strength get free from it, he sent his only begotten Son into the world and laid on him

the sins of all men, saying: 'Be thou that Peter the denier, that Paul the persecutor, that David the adulterer, that sinner who ate the apple in Paradise, that thief on the cross; in a word, be thou the person who has done the sins of all men; consider then how thou mayest pay and make satisfaction for them.' Then comes in the law and says: 'I find him a sinner, and a sinner who has taken unto himself the sins of all men, and I see no sin besides except in him, therefore let him die on the cross!' and so the law falls upon him and slays him. By this transaction the whole world has been purged and purified of all sins, and at the same time, therefore, been set free from death and from all evil." By giving our hearty belief to this transaction we are admitted to its benefits.

Here we have the *Cabala vera,* says Luther, the true mystery of Christian-

ity—here, in the transaction just recorded. I will not now discuss the misunderstanding of St. Paul which Luther's message of comfort involves. I will not discuss its faults as a religious conception. I will admit that it has been indeed a message of comfort to thousands, and has produced much good and much happiness. I will simply point out that it is mythology, and that this is daily becoming more and more evident; as sheer mythology, at bottom, as Saturn's devouring his children or Pallas springing from the head of Zeus. The transaction between the magnified and non-natural man, whom Luther calls "the merciful Father," and his Son, never really took place; or what comes to the same thing, its having taken place can no more be verified, and has no more real probability in its favour, than Saturn's devouring his children or Pallas springing from the head of Zeus,

This character of mythology is a disadvantage to Luther's message of comfort now. But it was an advantage to it when the message was delivered. It gave to it an immense superiority in effectiveness over such a message of comfort as Tauler's. The one leavened a group, and individuals; the other created the Protestant Churches.

To the mass of those who seek religion, an element of mythology in it, far from being an objection, has hitherto been a recommendation and attraction; and they hold to this element as long as ever they can. Only, to moral and serious people, such as were the Germanic races who made the Reformation, it must be a moral mythology, and moreover a mythology receivable and approvable by them in the intellectual stage at which they are then arrived. The serious Germanic races, visited by that *soul-hunger* which Tauler describes, could easily

be brought to recognise that much of the mythology presented to them by medieval religion, with its machinery of Virgin and saints, Pope and priests, was unscriptural and immoral; and that good works in the current conception of them as "fasts, pilgrimages, rosaries, vows"—to adopt Luther's list—were unfruitful. A powerful spirit who went to the Bible and produced from it a new and grave mythology with a new and grave conception of righteousness, was the man for that moment. Luther's doctrine of justification, Calvin's doctrine of election, were far more effective to win crowds and found churches than Tauler's *Following of Christ* just because the doctrines of Calvin and Luther are mythology, while the doctrine of Tauler is not. Luther's doctrine and Calvin's were a mythology appealing directly and solely to the Bible for support, and they professed, also, to

deepen men's conception of righteousness; they were therefore acceptable to thousands of serious people in the intellectual and moral stage of that time. They were, however, a mythology. But as such they enlisted in their favour those forces of imagination, wonder, and awe, which men love to feel aroused within them; and they enlisted these in an immeasurably greater degree than Tauler's doctrine of the *Following of Christ,* which is not a mythology at all. Hence their immeasurably greater scale of effect and number of adherents.

And so it has been ever since, up to this day. Let us confine our view to our own country. Hitherto an element of mythology, the stronger and the more turbid the better, has been a help rather than a hindrance to what are called religious causes. To the Calvinists, to the Methodists, to the Revivalists, to the Salvation Army, have been the strik-

ing effects and the heavy numbers; to the Latitude Men, to Leighton, to Erskine of Linlathen, as to Tauler and his friends in the fourteenth century, action on a group merely, or on individuals. Men such as Butler, or Wilson of Sodor and Man, who have had far wider influence in our religious world than the mystics, and who yet at the same time were true "Friends of God" at heart, have owed their wide influence not to this character but chiefly to something else. The true grandeur of Butler is in his sacred horror at the thought "of committing the dreadful mistake of leaving the course marked out for us by nature, whatever that nature may be;" his reputation is from his embarrassed and unsatisfying apologetic. The true glory of Wilson is his living and abiding sense that "sin is against nature, therefore sinners can never have

a joy;" his reputation is as the most exemplary of Anglican Churchmen.

The immense, the epoch-making change of our own day, is that a stage in our intellectual development is now declaring itself when mythology, whether moral or immoral, as a basis for religion is no longer receivable, is no longer an aid to religion but an obstacle. Our own nation is not specially lucid, it is strongly religious. We have witnessed in the Salvation Army the spectacle of one of the crudest and most turbid developments of religion with the element of mythology in full sway; and yet it is certain that, even amongst ourselves, over all which is most vigorous and progressive in our population, mythology in religion has lost or is fast losing its power, and that it has no future. The gross mob has ever been apt to show brutality and hostility towards religion,

and demonstrations of this spirit we have often enough still. But mingled with the mere ignoble and vicious enmity against any discipline to raise, restrain, and transform, there is also in the common people now a sense of impatience and anger at what they think futile trifling with them on the part of those who offer to them, in their sore need, the old mythological religion—a thing felt to be impossible of reception and going if not quite gone, incapable of either solving the present or founding the future.

This change is creating a situation much more favourable to the mystics. Whole libraries of theology have lost their interest when it is perceived that they make mythology the basis of religion, and that to take seriously this mythology is impossible. But for those groups and individuals, little regarded in their day, whom their heart prompted to rest religion on natural truth rather

than on mythology, the hour of hearing and of well-inclined attention has at last come. For a long while it was heavily against them that they merely preached the following of Christ, instead of the article of justification, the article of election; now at last it is in their favour.

Let me be candid. I love the mystics, but what I find best in them is their golden single sentences, not the whole conduct of their argument and result of their work. I should mislead the reader if I led him to suppose that he will find any great body of discourse in the work attributed to Tauler, *The Following of Christ,* which Mr. Morell has translated, of like value with the detached sentences from it which I have quoted above. But the little book is well worth reading if only for the sake of such sentences. The general argument, too, if not complete and satisfying, has an interest of its own from the

natural, or, as we nowadays say, the *positive* point of view taken by the author, without regard to mythology, or conventions, or *shams,* in Carlyle's phrase, of any kind.

For instance, the book developes the idea of following Christ, and teaches how for him who would follow Christ, poverty, both inward and outward, is necessary. Christ's is emphatically a "*poor* life." Yet to follow him and his life is really to follow nature, to be happy. And to enter into the kingdom of heaven is really nothing else than this following him, this following nature, this being happy. When Jesus said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven," this was, in our mystic's view, but another way of saying: "How hardly shall they that have riches follow me and my life, live naturally, be happy." The life poor in external goods, as Christ's was,

is therefore, concludes our mystic, the happy, natural life, the life to be preferred.

But the official and current religion interprets Christ's words, as we all know, in quite another fashion, and makes him in fact say: "If you trust in riches, if you make a bad use of riches, you cannot enter after death into the paradise above the sky." Now I do not at present inquire whether the doctrine of our mystic is right or wrong, adequate or inadequate. But it is well to remark how much nearer, at any rate, he comes to the mind of Christ, how much more sincerely and faithfully he interprets it, than our official religion does. For undoubtedly what Jesus meant by the kingdom of God or of heaven was the reign of saints, the ideal future society on earth. "How hardly shall they that have riches be fit for the society of the future," was what he in

fact said. One who is unfit for this ideal society does not follow Christ; he is also in conflict with nature, cannot be happy. This is the doctrine of Jesus, and our mystic has rightly seized it. Jesus threw out the doctrine and left it to bear fruit. It has worked in many and many an individual mind since, and will work more and more. The worldly themselves have to deal with it. They can free themselves from all concern about the paradise above the sky, but from concern about the society of the future they cannot. It will arrive, its beginnings are even now. No one yet, however, has disengaged the doctrine from difficulty, has so set it forth as to make it useable and serviceable; certainly our mystic has not. But to have rightly seized it is something.

Christ's sentence on riches is but a corollary from what we call his *secret:* "He that loveth his life shall lose it, he

that will lose his life shall save it." Now the infinite progress possible in Christianity lies in the gradually successful application, to doctrines like this secret of Jesus and the corollary from it, of what we call his *epieikeia,* his temper of sweet reasonableness, consummate balance, unerring felicity. Although the application has here not yet been successfully made, and the mystics have not made it, yet the secret and its corollary are unceasingly felt to have in them something deeply important, and to be full of future; at the same time that mythology, like Luther's article of justification or Calvin's article of election, is felt to be passing quite away and to have no future at all. The mystics, then, have the merit of keeping always before their minds, and endeavouring earnestly to make operative on their lives, just that in Christianity which is not perishable but abiding.

But I ought before I end to let our mystic, whether he be indeed Tauler as Mr. Morell thinks, or another, to speak for himself at more length than I have let him speak hitherto. I have mentioned his insistence on external poverty; let us hear him on internal poverty, poverty of spirit, "a going out of yourself and out of everything earthly." A man "must perceive and listen to the eternal word, and this hearing bringeth him to everlasting life."

"Through the outer world that men hear, they attain to the inner world, which God speaketh in the essence of the soul. They who have not come to this should hear preaching, and learn and follow what they hear or read; thus they come to the real truth, and to life, which is God. Even if a man is so advanced that he hear the word in himself, he is yet not at all times prepared for it, for bodily nature cannot bear it, and a man must sometimes turn to his senses and be active; but he ought to direct this work of the senses to the best end. If preaching is use-

ful to him, he can hear it; if an outward virtue is useful to him, he can work it; and he ought to exercise himself in what he recognises as the best. But this by no means hindereth him from hearing the everlasting word, but it furthers him to what is best. And he should drop and drive out with violence all that hindereth him in this. Then he doeth as Jesus did in the Temple, when he drove out buyers and sellers and said: "My house is a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." A pure heart is a temple of God; the tradesmen whom Jesus drove out are the worldly furniture and goods that rust in the heart and are hurtful to it. If now the heart keepeth the useless thoughts and tarrieth over them, it is no longer a house of prayer but a den of thieves, for the evil thoughts drive out God from his dwelling and murder him. But the man who resisteth all thoughts that keep him apart from God, receiveth from God living, divine power. This inpouring is God's inspeaking, and that is the life full of ecstasy and joy."

The reader will recognise the strain of homage which from age to age successive generations of mystics have ever

loved to uplift to "the eternal word." I will not say that it is entirely satisfying, but at least it is always refreshing, consoling, and ennobling.

Whoever turns to the little volume which Mr. Morell has translated will find plenty in this strain to give him refreshment. But he will find more than this, he will find sentences such as those of which I spoke in beginning, and to which in ending I would return; isolated sentences fitted to abide in the memory, to be a possession for the mind and soul, to form the character. "Sin killeth nature, but nature is abhorrent of death; therefore sin is against nature, therefore sinners can never have a joy." "They who have left sins and come to grace have more delight and joy in one day than all sinners have ever gained."

AN ETON BOY

AN ETON BOY

"IT is becoming a mania with him," people will say; "he has schools on the brain!" Yes, I have certainly made secondary schools my theme very often, and for the public ear the attractions of this theme are not inexhaustible. Perhaps it is time that I quitted it, but I should like the leave-taking to be a kind one. I have said a great deal of harm of English secondary instruction. It deserves all the blame that I have cast upon it, and I could wish everybody to grow more and more impatient of its present condition amongst us. Necessarily, as I wished to make people dissatisfied with the thing, I have insisted upon its faults; I have insisted upon the faults of the civilisation

which goes along with it, and which is in a considerable measure the product of it. But our actual secondary schools, like our actual civilization, have the merit of existing. They are not, like all projects for recasting them, an ideal; they have the merit of existing. They are the *modus vivendi,* as the phrase now is, the schools and the civilization are the *modus vivendi* found by our nation for its wants, and brought into fact, and shape, and actual working. The good which our nation has in it, it has put into them, as well as the bad. They live by the good in them rather than by the bad. At any rate, it is to the good which dwells in them, and in the nation which made them, that we have to appeal in all our projects for raising them, and for bringing them nearer to the ideal which lovers of perfection frame for them.

Suppose we take that figure we know

so well, the earnest and nonconforming Liberal of our middle classes, as his schools and his civilisation have made him. He is for disestablishment; he is for temperance; he has an eye to his wife's sister; he is a member of his local caucus; he is learning to go up to Birmingham every year to the feast of Mr. Chamberlain. His inadequacy is but too visible. Take him, even, raised, cleared, refined, ennobled, as we see him in Dr. Alexander Raleigh, the late well-known Nonconformist minister of Stamford Hill, whose memoir has recently been published. Take Dr. Raleigh, as he himself would have desired to be taken, dilating on a theme infinitely precious to him—*the world to come.* "My hope of that world seems to be my religion. If I were to lose it, this whole life would be overcast in a moment with a gloom which nothing could disperse. Yet a little while, and

we shall be sorrowless and sinless, like the angels, like God, and, looking back on the struggles and sorrows of earth, astonished that things so slight and transient could have so much discomposed us." This transference of our ideal from earth to the sky—this recourse, for the fulfilment of our hopes and for the realisation of the kingdom of God, to a supernatural, future, angelic, fantastic world—is, indeed, to our popular religion the most familiar and favourite conception possible. Yet it is contrary to the very central thought and aim of Jesus; it is a conception which, whether in the form of the new Jerusalem of popular Judaism, or in the form of the glorified and unending tea-meeting of popular Protestantism, Jesus passed his life in striving to transform, and in collision with which he met his death. And so long as our main stock and force of serious people

have their minds imprisoned in this conception, so long will "things so slight and transient" as their politics, their culture, their civilisation, be in the state in which we see them now: they will be narrowed and perverted. Nevertheless, what a store of virtue there is in our main body of serious people even now, with their minds imprisoned in this Judaic conception; what qualities of character and energy are in such leaders of them as Dr. Raleigh! Nay, what a store of virtue there is even in their civilisation itself, narrowed and stunted though it be! Imperfect as it is, it has founded itself, it has made its way, it exists; the good which is in it, it has succeeded in bringing forth and establishing against a thousand hindrances, a thousand difficulties. We see its faults, we contrast it with our ideal; but our ideal has not yet done as much. And for making itself fact, this civilisa-

tion has found in its Judaic conceptions the requisite guidance and stimulus, and probably only in conceptions of this kind could it have done so.

Take, again, that other type which we have accustomed ourselves to call, for shortness, the Barbarian. Take it first in its adult and rigid stage, devoid of openness of mind, devoid of flexibility, with little culture and with no ideas, considerably materialised, staunch for "our traditional, existing social arrangements," fiercely ready with the reproach of "revolution" and "atheism" against all its disturbers. Evidently this is the very type of personage for which Jesus declared entrance to the kingdom of God to be well-nigh impossible. Take this type in its far more amiable stage, with the beauty and freshness of youth investing it; take it unspoiled, gay, brave, spirited, generous; take it as the Eton boy.

"As Master of the Beagles," so testifies the admiring record of such a boy in the *Eton College Chronicle,* "he showed himself to possess all the qualities of a keen sportsman, with an instinctive knowledge of the craft." The aged Barbarian will, upon this, admiringly mumble to us his story how the battle of Waterloo was won in the playing-fields of Eton. Alas! disasters have been prepared in those playing-fields as well as victories; disasters due to inadequate mental training—to want of application, knowledge, intelligence, lucidity. The Eton playing-fields have their great charms, notwithstanding; but with what felicity of unconscious satire does that stroke of "the Master of the Beagles" hit off our whole system of provision of public secondary schools; a provision for the fortunate and privileged few, but for the many, for the nation, ridiculously impossible!

And yet, as we said of the Philistine and his civilisation, so we may say of the Barbarian and his civilisation also: What merits they have, what a store of virtue! First of all, they have the grand merit of existing, of having—unlike our ideal society of the future—advanced out of the state of prospectus into the state of fact. They have in great part created the *modus vivendi* by which our life is actually carried forward, and by which England is what it is. In the second place, they have intrinsic merits of nature and character; and by these, indeed, have mainly done their work in the world. Even the adult and rigid Barbarian has often invaluable qualities. It is hard for him, no doubt, to enter into the kingdom of God—hard for him to believe in the sentiment of the ideal life transforming the life which now is, to believe in it and come to serve it—hard, but not im-

possible. And in the young the qualities take a brighter colour, and the rich and magical time of youth adds graces of its own to them; and then, in happy natures, they are irresistible. In a nature of this kind I propose now to show them.

The letters and diary of an Eton boy, a young lieutenant in the army who died of dysentery in South Africa, came the other day into my hands. They have not been published, but they were printed as a record of him for his family and his friends. He had been with his regiment little more than a year; the letters and diary extend over a space of less than two months. I fell in, by chance, with the slight volume which is his memorial, and his name made me look through the pages; for the name awakened reminiscences of distant Oxford days, when I had known it in another generation. The passing atten-

tion which his name at first drew was presently fixed and charmed by what I read. I have received permission to give to the public some notice of the slight and unpretending record which thus captivated my interest.

Arthur Clynton Baskerville Mynors was born in 1856, of a Herefordshire family. His bringing-up was that of an English boy in an English country house. In January, 1870, he went to Eton, and left at Election, 1875. "His life here," says the short record of him in the *Eton College Chronicle*, "was always joyous, a fearless keen boyhood, spent *sans peur et sans reproche*. Many will remember him as fleet of foot and of lasting powers, winning the mile and the steeplechase in 1874, and the walking race in 1875. As Master of the Beagles in 1875 he showed himself to possess all the qualities of a keen sportsman, with an instinctive knowledge of the craft."

After leaving Eton he joined the Oxford militia, and at the beginning of 1878 obtained a commission in the 60th Rifles. He had been just a year with his battalion when it was sent to South Africa. He sailed on the 19th of February, and on the 25th of April he died of dysentery at Fort Pearson, Natal. For these two months we have his letters and diary, written to his father and mother at home. I wish to let him tell his own story as far as possible, and we will begin with his first letter.

"'DUBLIN CASTLE,' *February 20th.*

"MY DEAR PAPA,

"We were all safe on board last night, and steamed down the Thames, and anchored for the night. The boat is a beautiful one, it goes very smooth as yet; we have passed Dover and Folkestone, and are now off Dungeness. To-night we reach Dartmouth at twelve, and wait till twelve next day. There is an *oudacious* crowd on board with all the men, and nothing to do. The cabins we sleep in are the most extraordinary, two of us, bed

and all, in a place about as big as the dining-room table at home, and when it's rough, as far as I can see, we must tumble out; still, it is rather fun. The skipper is a first-rate fellow, lets us do what we like on board. He expects we shall get to Natal about the 18th or 19th of next month; we are sailing about eleven knots an hour, I wish we were going faster. It is very windy and cold on deck; the band played, which enlivened us a little. We have mess as usual, only at six o'clock. I have fitted all my things on your belt, and they do capitally. Please give my love to mamma and everybody that is staying at Durrant's, especially Aunt Ellen, and thank them all for everything they have given me. We stop at Madeira, when I will write to you again; so good-bye till then.

"Ever your most affectionate son,

"ARTHUR."

The next letter is written four days later.

" 'DUBLIN CASTLE,' *February 24th.*

"MY DEAR MAMMA,

"Many thanks for your letters, which I found waiting at Dartmouth, where we arrived after rather a rough voyage. There

were no end of people there assembled to see us off, and when we started we were lustily cheered by crowds on the shore; the band played 'Should old acquaintance,' &c., and we soon lost sight of England. Friday night everybody was ill, as the sea was rough. Saturday, in the Bay of Biscay, it was awful; the waves were mountains high—a grand sight—so much so, that the upper decks were washed over by the sea all day. I was awfully ill; in fact, so was everybody. On Saturday morning at 4 A. M. I was on watch; luckily for me it was much calmer. I found two of the horses had died in the night, and that several hammocks and other things had been washed overboard. I was awfully glad when we got out of the Bay. I'll never go to sea again if I can help it. Sunday was bright and sunny; everybody came up on deck after the bad weather, and we had quite a jolly day, steaming with a strong wind behind at about twelve and a half miles, or knots I should say, an hour. I was on duty that day. We consigned the poor horses to the deep. This morning was lovely, and we had a regular tropical shower, the weather, by-the-bye, getting much warmer. It's most absurd, since we started none of us have shaved; we are (not myself) all growing beards. It is aw-

fully slow, nothing to do but read. The men also have nothing to do. I wish we were at Natal, I do so detest the sea. It keeps very rough all the time, and the ship rolls horribly. The men have an awfully bad time of it; packed so close, they have scarcely room to breathe. All the officers and passengers have dinner, &c., together, down-stairs, in a stuffy place, not so bad to look at, but when it is full of sickly females, and no one in the best of humours, it's perfectly unbearable. Still we live in hopes of getting to Natal soon, where I hope we shall have some better fun. We get to Madeira to-morrow night at ten o'clock, and wait for about three hours for stores and the mails. I sent you a picture of the vessel. I hope you got it safe. I hope you were none the worse for waiting in the cold and seeing me off at Tilbury. I have no more to say, but, with best love to papa and all,

"I am ever, dear Mamma,
"Your affectionate son,
"ARTHUR."

Madeira is reached and left; they have a week "awfully hot," during which "I have been learning signalling, which will

probably come in useful in the bush." The line has now been crossed, they are approaching Cape Town.

"It has been getting much cooler the last few days, and to-day quite a breeze and rather rough; the ship is getting lighter, and consequently rolls more. We had some pistol practising yesterday, and a nigger entertainment last night, which was great fun. I spend the day mostly in reading, but it is awfully slow, nothing to do. . . . So far, we have had a capital passage, but the trade winds are dead against us now. I wonder how you are all getting on; you will soon begin fishing at Aberedw. Have the hounds had any sport, and how are grandpapa and grandmamma? Please let granny have my letter, and tell her I would write, only one letter answers the purpose as there is so little to say; but I want lots of letters, to hear what is going on at home and at Bosbury. We are all ready to land at Natal; all our weapons are as sharp as needles. I wish we were there. You will hear plenty of news (even if I don't write often, as there may be no way of conveying the letters), as there are three correspondents going up to the front. The

Graphic correspondent has taken one or two drawings of our men on board ship, so you may see them; I advise you to take it in. I have written very badly, but must make excuse that the sea is rough to-day. Remind Charles about planting the gorse in the cockshoots, where the trees are bitten off by the rabbits. I don't fancy the mosquitoes in Natal. I believe there are swarms of them there, so I am going to buy a mosquito net at Cape Town. My next letter will probably be from Durban, in a week's time or so."

"For something to do," he copies out, to send with this letter, the verses written by a passenger on the burial of a private soldier who died on board. Then comes Cape Town, "a horrid place, very hot and dirty," but with the Table Mountain to make amends; "the rocks were rather like the Craigy rocks, only much larger and bolder." Then Cape Town is left, and they are in the last stage of their voyage.

"On Sunday morning I went to church at the cathedral, rather a fine building for Cape

Town. Had to go on board at one o'clock, and we sailed at two o'clock. We passed the Cape of Good Hope about six o'clock in the afternoon. The coast all along looked rugged and bare, very mountainous in the background, and rocks jutting boldly out. Rounding the point, the sea became very rough, and has been ever since. At dinner nothing can stand up, knives, forks, tumblers, bottles, everything sent flying about. There are no end of porpoises and dolphins all along the coast; they come swimming and jumping by the side of the vessel. Rounded Cape D'Agulhas about three in the morning; only saw the lighthouse. Monday was still rough, and we kept in sight of shore all day. We practised revolver-shooting most of the afternoon. To-day it rained all the morning . . . the country opposite us looks much flatter, and is quite green on the slopes of the hills. We amuse ourselves by looking through our field-glasses at the shore—we are now about three miles from it; enormous great sand-hills along the beach, and woody at the back. We have seen a few houses and some cattle, otherwise the country looks uninhabited. We passed Algoa Bay this morning. . . . I shall be very glad when we have landed, as this is the slowest work I ever went

through in my life; we sail along pretty fast, do about two hundred and seventy to three hundred miles in twenty-four hours. Another of the horses is very ill from the rough weather; I expect he will die before he gets on shore. The men and officers are none the worse for the journey, but I expect we shall get very foot-sore at first. We are in awfully bad training, as we can't get any exercise. How is poor old Martha? Give her my love. I suppose you are just beginning summer; here the winter is beginning. I believe in the winter-time there is no rain at all."

On Friday, the 21st of March, they are at Durban, and in tents; "the country looks beautiful; like Wales, only all the hills are bush." On Saturday they start to relieve Colonel Pearson, surrounded by the Zulus at Fort Ekowe. On Saturday, the 22nd, "went by train twelve miles, encamped, had dinner in dark; slept four hours, up at two o'clock in the dark." Then a diary gives a record of the march.

"*Sunday morning.*—Started at 4 A. M., to march in utter darkness; unpitched camp, packed up and off; marched six miles on awful bad road to Verulam; the hilliest and prettiest country I ever saw; forded two rivers; stopped eight hours at Verulam; bathed, washed my clothes, and started at three o'clock P. M., our baggage drawn by oxen, sixteen to twenty oxen in each waggon. Went to church at Verulam. Niggers awful-looking beasts, tall, strong, and active; wear no clothes at all, except very few round the waist. The battalion bathed in the Umhloti River. No more news about the war. Weather very hot from 9 A. M. till 3 P. M. The march to Victoria was fearful, dreadfully hot; the sun right on our heads; and carrying our ammunition and arms, almost heart-breaking. We got there just in time to see to pitch our tents and tumble into bed for a few hours, and on

"*Monday morning.*—Up at 2:20 in the dark, see nothing and find nothing; started, crossed and bathed in the Tongaati, up to our waists crossing, so wet and wretched. One halt for mid-day in Compensation Flat in the sun, no shade to be found and no rest; waited till 2:30 and marched nine miles, the longest and weariest I ever marched; the men were

almost dead with heat. Had only coffee and tea twice a day, and nothing else, unless we passed a public-house or shed, which were few and far between; and then what we bought was awfully dear. Still we scrape along; and at last at seven o'clock we got to our camping-place; put tents up in the dark; had some salt tinned beef and muddy water, and went to bed. Up next morning at 2:30 to a minute; lowered and packed our tents and off at 4 A. M.; crossed and bathed in the Umhali, which, we being pretty dirty from heat, refreshed us much; and then encamped at eight o'clock at the Umvoti River, up to our knees. Very, very hot; we washed some of our clothes, and this time a native who owned a mill was very kind and gave us some beer. We boiled our tinned meat and made soup; started much refreshed, and in much better spirits. The country very hilly and hot; Indian corn up to one's head in the fields. Some plantations of sugar-cane also in the country, which, when picked, was sweet and juicy. The Zulus or niggers here are scarcely human beings; naked and their skins like leather; awful beasts to look at and very hideous. This afternoon we passed Stanger Camp, and halted a mile and a half from the camp. The men just beginning to get into

condition again; since they left the ship they had been in very bad training for marching, owing to no exercise on board ship. Next morning we got up at 2:45, and down tents, and crossed a river (shoes and stockings off), and marched by New Gelderland about seven or eight miles by seven o'clock, and encamped by the Monoti River, where alligators and hippopotami are numerous; we bathed notwithstanding. It was hotter than ever; the country beautiful and hilly; no fences; mostly grass about as high as your thigh. We heard yesterday that the column going to relieve Pearson had crossed the Tugela, and was waiting for us before starting. . . . We shall cross the Tugela to-morrow.

Thursday, 27th.—A spy was caught yesterday at Fort Pearson in the camp. No one knows where the Zulu armies are; one day they are seen at one place, another at another; one meal lasts them for three days, and the bush they can creep through like snakes. Being nothing but Zulus (natives) about the country here, they come and watch us; in fact, they know everything that goes on. They are awfully wily; they are never to be caught in an open country, and never will be unless at Undini; the only time they will attack their enemy is before daybreak, and at

night when we encamp, and then they won't attack a very big force.

"My dear papa and mamma, I send you my diary."

Finding that they have still to wait a day at Fort Pearson, he writes a letter to accompany his diary, and gives an account of the military situation.

"We shall cross the river to-morrow or next day, and then we relieve Pearson. They can signal from here to them. Pearson says he is pretty well off, but has nine officers and one hundred and fifty men ill with dysentery. When Pearson is relieved, we by ourselves stay here; the other regiments return and make a depôt between Fort Pearson and Ekowe, where Pearson is encamped, and carry stores and provisions there; then we shall march to Undini, the king's kraal. At first it is a pretty clear road to Pearson, but afterwards there is a large bush which we have to get through to get at him. We shall be at Ekowe for about three weeks. We are about four miles from the sea, and the river is about a quarter of a mile across. Everything looks like business. Colonel Hopton, when we

march up, remains in command here, and at Fort Tenedos, the other side of the river. I saw him this morning; he asked after everybody at home. It is very jolly getting here, and having a day's rest, and some bread and fresh meat. All in very good spirits. Everything I have, and the rest of us, is washing and drying. My camp equipage is first rate—everything I want. The Zulus are very fine men, use assegaies and rifles of some sort. They treat the wounded fearfully; spear them through and through—at least, their women do. I enclose my diary of the month as I have no time to copy it."

On Friday, the 28th of March, the Tugela is crossed, and the diary recommences.

"We crossed the Tugela, being towed across. The men bivouacked and spent an awful night in pouring rain. Colonel Hopton gave me a bed in his tent. Most of the officers stood up in the rain all night. Next day,

Saturday, March 29th.—We started for Ekowe and marched about twelve miles. The column was five to six miles long, and we went awfully slow. There we laagered with shelter-trench outside. It would have taken

100,000 Zulus to take it. I and Keith (Turnour) on outpost duty all night (blue funk), and both tired and wet. Luckily no enemy came. Returned to camp tired, after the column had marched off.

Sunday, March 30th.—Started at ten. Much delay caused by waggons crossing a brook. Warm march. Burnt a lot of kraals on the way. Enemy flying in small detachments. Arrived at Amatakula River, one mile from river on Natal side. Great bother about laager being put up, and much confusion. Early to bed. Bright moonlight till twelve.

Monday, March 31st.—Under arms at four, expecting attack early. Enemy moving. Very hot; no wind; no shade. A buck ran into camp this morning and was assegaied, after much sport amongst the natives. Rumour of Cetewayo having offered peace; not believed, one word of it. Got into camp about 5:30, where we bivouacked.

Tuesday, April 1st.—Under arms at four. Marched about eight o'clock with great care, Zulus having been seen by scouts hovering about. This morning the order of advance was—

"57th.

"The sailors with a Gatling and rocket.

"Ourselves.

"Our train.

"Rear guard, 99th.

"Marines and 91st.

"Two Regiments of Natives,

protecting our waggons on the flanks. We were drawn up ready to receive the enemy twice, but they retreated. We reached our camping-place about four o'clock; laagered as usual, and made entrenchments round it, only making them nearly double the height. About one hour after we got in, it began to thunder, and the rain came down in torrents, wetting us through. Our feet had been wet for the last two days; in fact, we are never dry. No clothes to change, or anything, as now we have only got with us what we have got on, a mackintosh sheet, and a great-coat. We slept as well as we could. Had the sentries doubled, the enemy being expected to attack us next morning.

Wednesday, April 2nd.—Under arms at four; and just as day was beginning to break, our pickets reported the enemy advancing. Everything was got into readiness; the trenches manned; the pickets recalled. We saw the enemy coming out of a dingle in files,

and, opening out, they surrounded us in most splendid skirmishing order. The bravest fellows I ever saw. Our face was attacked first, as they had not had time to get round to the other side. At about 6:20 the first shot was fired, and soon all our men were blazing away; shots whizzing over our heads, the Gatling at the corner pounding it into them. They advanced at the double, creeping in shelter of the grass. We were so strong they could do nothing. Still they advanced within twenty yards, where afterwards some were picked up dead. Our men were awfully frightened and nervous at first, could not even speak, and shivered from funk; so we, the officers, had enough to do to keep the men cool. We repulsed them in about twenty minutes; whilst on our flanks and rear, where the other regiments were, the battle was still going on. Two of our companies were then taken round to relieve the other side, one of which was mine, so we marched under their fire to the rear face, and acted as a support. It was soon all over. We repulsed them on all sides. The native cavalry and native contingent were then let loose to pursue them; which they did, assegaieing most of the wounded on their way and not doing much damage to the enemy. There ought to have been a great many more

killed, but all the men were nervous and excited, and had not been under fire before. We counted and buried four hundred and seventy-six, but a great many were found the same day by our scouts, wounded and hiding in bushes some miles off. We finished at about 7:10, and the rest of the day we were burying them, and our own five poor fellows, and one officer, Johnson, of the 99th. I think we had thirty wounded. In our regiment one man was killed; he was in my company—shot right through the head; and Colonel Northey badly wounded, the shot entering at the shoulder and lodging itself in his back. It was got out. He is very weak; I only hope he may recover. Three other men in the regiment were wounded. It was a fearful sight—so many of these brave chaps lying about, dead and covered with blood and gore. They must have had a great many more wounded, whom they took away with them. I myself did not quite like the first few shots as they whizzed about over our heads, but found I had such a lot to do to keep the men in order and telling them when to shoot, that I did not mind it a bit."

This was the affair, or "battle," of Ginghilovo; and surely never was such

an affair described with a more prepossessing simplicity, modesty, and humanity. The next day, the 3rd of April, Ekowe was reached and Pearson relieved. On the 5th of April young Mynors with his battalion marched back to the scene of their recent action, Ginghilovo, where a fort was to be established for a base of operations. And now, with the common mention of bad weather and trying climate, comes the ominous mention of sickness also.

Saturday, April 5th.—We left Ekowe quite empty, having burnt the king's brother's kraal the day before. We halted for two hours, as our line of waggons with Pearson's was so long. It was awfully hot. The country is perfectly lovely; such grass and woods, hills, most beautiful flowers and trees; if only inhabited, it would be one of the most charming countries in the world. The climate is bad. So hot in the day-time and cold at night. Dew like rain. I saw, on our route to-day, after halting in the sun for a couple of hours, six or seven fellows fall out from sunstroke.

Sunday, April 6th.—Poor Colonel Northey died. We had a scare, or rather false alarm, at about 3:30 in the morning. Colonel Pemberton has got dysentery. We began half-rations to-day. Men not in good health."

That night the second instalment of diary is sent off by the courier from Ginghilovo, with a letter of a few lines, written by moonlight. "I hope this will find you all well at home. Here there is nothing but hard work, and very little to eat from morning till night. I am afraid it will be a long affair." The same Sunday night the diary is resumed.

"GINGHILOVO.—We came back here in the morning, after leaving Pearson to our right, who was going straight back to the Tugela to recruit his troops. We encamped about three-quarters of a mile from where we had had our battle. Passing the ground the stench was fearful, owing to natives who had dragged themselves off and died.

Monday, April 7th.—Colonel Pemberton still remains on the sick list; and several of

the officers have been suffering more or less from diarrhœa, caused by bad water. In my last letter I said we were on half-rations; but it only lasted for about two days, as we have got some more sent us. In the afternoon we moved up a small hill into a first-rate position, but water bad and a mile off, and even that not likely to last long. We have also on the next hill another laager for the natives and bullocks. It is, of course, a necessity to keep them out of the camp, because they make the place smell so. In the day-time it is awfully hot, the sun having such power; and at night cool, and very heavy dews wet you through if you did not wear a mackintosh. The men begin to improve in spirits, but it will be awfully slow here for a fortnight on the saltest of pork and hard biscuit, pork unfit to eat.

Wednesday, April 9th.—I was on duty from 3 to 4 A. M. Another scorching-hot day. A great deal of long grass has been burnt about the country, of course by the Zulus. Captain Tufnell—who was assuming command of the regiment, as we had no other officers—also very ill. We sit in the shade under the waggons out of the sun. Of course we cannot go much more than a couple of hundred yards

from the camp, except in small parties, so we find it rather dull. I got your letter from Mereworth, and was very glad to get it; always like having as much news as possible, as we seldom see a paper. . . . I walked round our new fort this afternoon. It is very strong, so to say, and would keep any Zulu army in the world off.

Thursday, April 10th.—My company was on outpost duty, so I was out all day long, and did not do much but keep a look-out. Most of the troops suffering from dysentery and want of sustenance. We expect a convoy soon, as we have only six days' more provisions. Awfully hot again to-day. The country all round our fort is more or less plain to the N., S., and E., where the King feeds his cattle. To the W. it is very mountainous, very like Scotland, only hills, I should say, higher. We see the Zulu fires at night in the distance. I wish we could get from here, but I believe we have to wait until all the forces are ready to advance. I don't know whether I told you about the native contingent. They are all black like niggers, and awful-looking beasts; have scarcely any clothes on at all. They are armed with rifles, but are very bad shots; the only good they are is after a vic-

tory to pursue the enemy, as they are very active; also they do not make bad scouts; they are very sharp-sighted, and can hear very quickly. We must in the end give the Zulus a thrashing, but the hard thing is to find them. We can never attack them, because we don't know where they are, and they will take good care only to attack us when we are in the bush or crossing rivers, and perhaps at night. When they advance at close quarters, they come like cavalry; but of course any English army can stop them if properly handled.

"Now, my dear papa and mamma, I must finish off. I hope this will catch the mail on Tuesday. I hope all the farms, &c., are doing well. With very best love to all, Martha, Jubber, and Pussy,

"I am, ever your affectionate son,

"ARTHUR."

On the night of Saturday, the 12th of April, poor boy, after being on duty all the previous day, Good Friday, "in the other laager where the niggers live," he was himself seized by sickness. On the 13th he writes home:—

"I was taken awfully seedy in the night

with diarrhœa, and to-day, Easter Sunday, I was obliged to go on the sick list, as my complaint had turned more to dysentery. The bad water and lowering food and bad climate are enough to kill anybody; still we struggle on, the same for everybody. Our native runners who take the post were yesterday chased on their way to the Tugela, and had to return here. A convoy with provisions has arrived here all safe; so far so good, as long as it lasts. We expect to be here a month or six weeks doing nothing, unless we have to alter the position of our fort owing to the scarcity of water. The nights get colder, and the sun is hotter than any English sun in the day-time. . . . When we left England we were 700 strong, and now we figure about 628, caused mostly by men gone to hospital. Some two or three of our cattle die every night, also a horse or two; consequently, being only just covered with earth for burial, there are numerous unhealthy smells. I tried to get leave with Hutton to go shooting some buck which had been seen, but was refused as not being safe. We got our first English papers on Thursday, and very glad we were to get them. By-the-bye, have you been fishing, and what sport? Please tell me everything. How are grandmamma and grandpapa? I have not heard of

or from them. I hope you send them my scribbles; I daresay they are very hard to make out, but having only a blanket and sheet (waterproof) with us, there is very little paper to be got. What I write with now is a pen I bought, which you dip in water and it writes as you see. How is Jubber, and how is Edmund Carew? The Zulus around us amuse themselves by burning grass, I suppose with the idea to starve our cattle. Lord Chelmsford has gone back to Durban. All the troops have arrived safe, the 17th only losing three horses on their journey. The niggers brought us in some sweet potatoes yesterday which are horrible things, still they are of the vegetable description. . . . The Colonel is still suffering from dysentery, also Tufnell; so Cramer, the second captain, is in command of us. I should very much like to have the *Hereford Times* forwarded to me, as it would give me all the county news. We had service this morning for the first time since we left the 'Dublin Castle'; every other Sunday we have been marching. We killed an enormous snake the other day, about five or six feet long. Two rhinoceroses have been seen near here feeding; I wish I could get a shot at them, but can't get leave to get out. Has Colonel Price had much sport with the

hounds, and how are all the horses, colts, mares, &c.? How does the Cwm get on; I wish I was there; also the ravens, everything? Colonel Northey is a great loss; he was married, too, and his wife a very nice person. Tell grandpapa I find the little book he gave me very useful; also your Bible, which I always carry with me. To-day is Easter Sunday, and a convoy has just been sighted; they say we shall get the mail. I know I am writing great bosh, but have nothing else to do. If you happen to see Mr. Walsh, please thank him for my revolver; I find it very useful, and it shoots first rate, also remember me to Aunt Ellen, and tell her she does not know how much I am indebted to her. . . . Several fellows have followed my idea of writing a diary and posting it; it seems very lazy and undutiful of me, but it is perhaps better than nothing. I do wish you could be here for a day or two to see the country, and the trees and shrubs that grow wild, just like a flower garden. I should say the grass here is better for feeding than any in England, one could easily mow three or four crops of hay in the year. The only thing, or one of the few things, the Zulus cultivate is Indian corn, what they call mealies; also a few fields of sugar-cane here and there. We are not many miles

from the sea, as we can hear it when the wind is the right way, from six to ten miles I daresay.

Monday.—Convoy arrived all safe last night. By the mail poor Keith Turnour heard he had lost his father. I was awfully sorry, as I could not do any work, being still on the sick list. My dysentery still sticks to me with bad pain in my inside, but I feel otherwise well in myself. I slept under a cart last night —quite a luxury, as it keeps the dew off. To-day we are burning the grass round our laager, so that the Zulus cannot set fire to it and attack us at the same time. The men have had fresh meat the last two days, as several bullocks have come up from Tugela. They are killed at eight in the morning, and eaten at one. We got some jam up last night, so we are doing pretty well now. The only thing I wish is that the Zulus would attack us again. It is getting quite slow doing nothing. Captain Tufnell is off the sick list to-day, and takes command of the regiment. How are Uncle Tom and Aunt Conty getting on? Having no end of fun, I'll be bound. Our laager is about twenty miles from Fort Pearson on the Tugela, and sixteen miles from the now abandoned Ekowe, which we can see with our telescopes. We are all becoming

very learned cooks, as we cook all our meat, salt meat, &c., make soup and different things of them. The worst of it is we have very few materials to cook in, mostly provided by the waggon conductors. We made some mealie cakes of Indian corn, which were first rate at the time, but awfully indigestible afterwards; I'm afraid the fault of the cooking; I wish I had taken lessons from Miles before I left.

Tuesday, April 15th.—The convoy of empty waggons left at six to go to Tugela. Spent a very bad night, suffering from diarrhœa, and felt much weaker to-day; still I hope I shall get over it soon. Some of the fellows got leave to shoot, and they shot five golden plovers, or grey kind of plovers, which are very acceptable to our larder. I felt awfully dull, nothing to do but sit under a cart out of the sun and try to sleep. The scouts went out some six or seven miles to-day and burnt several kraals. Four Zulu women and a boy were brought in yesterday, the most hideous creatures I ever saw, more like wild animals. I am going to post my letter to-night, so as to be certain to catch the mail. I hope you are all well, and love to everybody.

"Ever your most affectionate son,

"ARTHUR."

P. S.—I was very glad to get a letter from

you and papa last night, of March 11th. I am exceedingly sorry to hear of grandmamma's attack. It must indeed have been very serious. I only hope she may recover for some time, and be well when I get home again. I had rather a better night last night, but am still very weak. Sorry to hear 'Masquerade' is a roarer. Have not had grandpapa's and Elinor's letters yet: must have missed the mail."

He never got home, and he wrote no more; the cold nights, and heavy dews, and suns "hotter than any English sun," had done their work. On the 24th of April he was sent to the hospital at Fort Pearson, where Colonel Hopton, a Herefordshire neighbour, was in command; the poor boy died on the day following, and in a letter to his father Colonel Hopton relates the end.

"Yesterday morning I got a note from an officer of the 60th, Gunning, who appears to have been told by Arthur that he knew me, informing me that he, Arthur, was very ill with dysentery, and that the doctor had sent

him to Fort Pearson in hopes that the change of air would do him good, and asking me to meet the convoy on arrival here and get Arthur at once into the hospital. I met the empty convoy of waggons last evening, as they approached our camp, and got the one with Arthur in it over the river (Tugela) as soon as I could, and sent it up to hospital. This morning early I went to see him, having first asked the doctor in charge about him. He at once told me he feared the worst. When I saw him I did not think he would recover. His servant was with him, who was very attentive to him. We gave him what medical comforts could be got, such as beef-tea and champagne. I stayed with him all the morning, until 2 P. M., and at his request I read and prayed by his stretcher side; he was then quite sensible and followed all I said, and repeated some of the prayers after me. All this time he was very weak, and hardly able to raise himself up, although his servant told me that yesterday he was able to stand and walk. The disease for some days seems to have taken hold of him. He passed nothing but pure blood, and when I first saw him was reduced almost to a skeleton. About 2 P. M., having changed his shirt and made him as comfortable as I could, I left

him, telling him I would come back soon. Some time afterwards I got a message from him asking me to go back, which I did, about 5:30 P. M. I found a Captain Cardew, one of the staff officers, with him. He had just read the fourteenth chapter of St. John to him, which he listened to, and asked Cardew to read slowly, so that he might follow. A doctor was also with him. They told me that the end was approaching. We all stayed with him till about 7 P. M., when he gave a little sigh and passed away; he was not sensible for the last hour, but appeared not to suffer any pain. When I was with him in the morning, I said: 'Arthur, I shall write by the post to-night, to tell your mother how ill you are.' He said: 'Yes, please, Colonel, write to mamma.' It was at this time that he asked me to read to him and repeated after me the Lord's Prayer."

A little more is added by a friend and brother officer, Lieutenant Hutton, a corporal from whose company had helped the dying boy's servant in his attendance on his master.

"The corporal at the boy's request had on several occasions read to him both from the

Bible and Prayer Book, and as the corporal expressed himself to me, he seemed always more peaceful and happy afterwards. His servant Starman was most struck by the heroic and resigned way in which his master bore the pain of his disease shortly before his death. Knowing the end was approaching, and seeing his master inclined to move, Starman got up and was about to smooth his pillow for him, when the boy, with a smile that as he said he will never forget, turned and whispered: 'Hush, don't touch me, I am going to heaven;' and so fell asleep."

On the 26th of April, the day after his death, Arthur Mynors was buried under a mimosa-tree, on a grassy slope looking down to the sea over the lovely valley of the Tugela. On the 2nd of May some men of his regiment, the 60th, put a small rough wooden cross over his grave, with this inscription:—

IN MEMORY OF
LIEUT. MYNORS,
3/60,
WHO DIED APRIL 25, 1879,
AGED 22 YEARS.

It was a happy nature that, by the banks of the Tugela, passed thus early away—a happy and beautiful nature. His simple letters and diary, which we have been following, show him to us better than any admiring description. They show a nature fresh, wholesome, gay; an English boy with the tastes of his age and bringing up, with a keen love of sport, with a genuine love for the country, a genuine eye for it—Greek in his simplicity and truth of feeling, Greek in his simplicity and truth of touch. We see him full of natural affection, and not ashamed of manifesting it; bred in habits of religion, and not ashamed of retaining them; without a speck of affectation, without a shadow of pretension, unsullied, brave, true, kind, respectful, grateful, uncensorious, uncomplaining; in the time to act, cheerfully active; in the time to suffer, cheerfully enduring. So to his friends he

seemed, and so their testimony shows him—testimony which by its affectionate warmth proves the character which could inspire it to have been no ordinary one. "I am sure you and anybody who knew him," writes a brother officer, "will be grieved beyond measure to hear of the death of our dear Bunny Mynors, of dysentery. I can't tell you what a loss he is to us, as he was such a favourite with us all. He had endeared himself in his short stay of a year with men and officers alike, more than is given to the lot of most of us." "He had all the qualities," says another, "of a good soldier and a leader of men, combined with a perfect temper, thorough unselfishness, and a genial cheery manner." "The life and soul of the mess," writes the adjutant of his battalion, himself an Etonian, "keen at all sports and games, and a universal favourite wherever we have been quar-

tered—it seems hard to lose him. But when I add that in all professional matters he was most earnest, and so keen to be well up in his work, strict and yet with a perfect manner, a favourite with his men, and, as all admit, the most promising boy Eton had sent to our ranks for many a day—when I add this, I feel that not only we who knew him, but all the battalion, must grieve, and will do so for the loss of one who promised to be such a credit to his regiment. . . . The old school may well grieve for so fine a character as his who has just been taken from us. I know no finer fellows, or those who do their work so well, as those like Mynors, who never said an unkind word of any one, and consequently no one ever said any word except of praise or love for them." "Such as they," to the same effect says his tutor, Mr. Warre, who has gained and kept the loving regard and trust

of so many generations of his Eton pupils, as he gained and kept those of young Mynors; "such as *they* have from others the love that they deserve."

Natures so beautiful are not common; and those who have seen and possessed the bright presence of such a boy, while they mourn their irreparable loss, cannot but think most of his rareness, his uniqueness. For me, a stranger, and speaking not to his friends but to the wide public, I confess that when I have paid my tribute of sympathy to a beautiful character and to a profound sorrow, it is rather to what he has in common with others that my thoughts are drawn, than to what is unique in him. The order of things in which he was brought up, the school system in which he was educated, produce, not indeed many natures so sweet as his, but in all good natures many of his virtues. That school system is a close and narrow one; that or-

der of things is changing, and will surely pass away. Vain are endeavours to keep it fixed for ever, impotent are regrets for it; it will pass away. The received ideas which furnished the mind of Arthur Mynors, as they in general furnish the minds of English boys of his class, and which determine his and their intellectual vision, will change. But under the old order of things, and with its received ideas, there were bred great and precious virtues; it is good for us to rest our eyes upon them, to feel their value, to resolve amid all chances and changes to save and nourish them, as saved and nourished they can be. Our slowness of development in England has its excellent uses in enabling indispensable virtues to take root, and to make themselves felt by us to be indispensable. Our French neighbours have moved faster than we; they have more lucidity, in several important re-

spects, than we have; they have fewer illusions. But a modern French schoolboy, Voltairian and emancipated, reading *La Fille Elisa* and *Nana,* making it his pastime to play tricks on his chaplain, to mock and flout him and his teaching—the production of a race of lucid school-boys of this kind is a dangerous privilege. When I lay down the memoir of Dr. Raleigh I feel that, crude and faulty as is the type of religion offered by Puritanism, narrow and false as is its conception of human life, materialistic and impossible as is its world to come, yet the seriousness, soberness, and devout energy of Puritanism are a prize, once won, never to be lost; they are a possession to our race for ever. And in taking leave of the letters and diary of Arthur Mynors, I feel that this natural and charming boy, too, has virtues, he and others like him, which are part of the very tradition and life of

England; which have gone to make "the ancient and inbred integrity, piety, good-nature, and good-humour of the English people,"[1] and which can no more perish than that ideal.

[1] Burke.

THE END

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